

## Global politics: how to use and apply theories of international relations

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**Global Politics:  
How to Use and Apply Theories of  
International Relations**

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**Global Politics:  
How to Use and Apply Theories of  
International Relations**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

*BY KLAUS SEGBERS*

This working paper presents the results of my introductory lecture into global politics in the summer term of 2004 at Freie Universität Berlin. The organizing idea is to provide future students with some basic knowledge and tools for being prepared for future, similar lectures.

The idea of this lecture is to give the students an overview of approaches and issues relevant for International Relations (IR). This is implemented in the following way. During the first hour, I present and explain relevant approaches to and issues of IR. Afterwards, for the second hour, the students disperse into groups and work on given questions related to the main topic, i. e. mostly to the theory discussed in that session. The respective theory has to be applied to a case, i.e. to a country or conflict. The countries / conflicts are stable within one group over the whole term. Finally, in the third hour, reports from the working groups are presented to the plenary session.

This working paper aims at both – presenting the theories, and giving an idea of the work in the working groups. The following pages will offer brief sketches of the most relevant approaches to interpreting international relations / global politics. We start with looking into the two macro-approaches of social sciences, namely positivism and constructivism. Then we proceed to neo/ realism, institutionalism, world systems, liberalism / pluralism, and cognitivism.

Afterwards, we present examples of the tasks, addressed by the students of my lecture in the summer term 2004. They had to apply those theories to their respective region and conflicts.

The structure of the lectures differs somewhat from this outline and will be presented briefly. I start with the two meta-theories: positivism and constructivism. The IR theories are arranged re. their views on and from different levels of analysis. First come the global (or world) system theories (5<sup>th</sup> or system level perspective), followed

by institutionalism and regime theories (explaining 3<sup>rd</sup> (state) - and 4<sup>th</sup> (supro-state) level phenomena from a 3<sup>rd</sup> (state) image perspective). Next in line are realism and neo-realism, addressing 3<sup>rd</sup> level behavior from either a 1<sup>st</sup> (individual) or 5<sup>th</sup> level outlook. Then we have theories like two-level games and second image reversed explaining 3<sup>rd</sup> level outcomes from a 2<sup>nd</sup> (domestic) level. This is followed by pluralist, liberal and domestic structure approaches explaining state actions (3<sup>rd</sup> level) from a 2<sup>nd</sup> level of analysis. Finally, there are cognitivist theories looking into 1<sup>st</sup> image factors such as mind sets for explaining IR.



# THE GAME OF THORIES

BY KLAUS SEGBERS

| Substantial<br>Theories of<br>IR | Meta-Theories          |  |                               |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
|                                  | Positivism / Ratchoice |  | Reflectivism / Constructivism |
|                                  | World Systems          | Institutions                           |                               |
|                                  | Cognitive Approaches   |  |                               |
|                                  | (Neo-) Realism         | Liberalism /<br>domestic<br>approaches |                               |

## POSITIVISM – CONSTRUCTIVISM/ META THEORIES

Before we come to briefly presenting theories interpreting global politics, we have to make an important digression. We have to think about what we are doing here, and how we are doing it – making sense of global politics. This is related to very general and important questions related to **social sciences**. Two things have to be made clear. First, it is not possible to think about anything (at least in scientific terms) without making some very **basic assumptions** about how this will be organized. So the apparently attractive option sometimes heard in seminars “let’s do this without theories” is not workable. Even when these basic assumptions are not explicated, they are still there. We can’t do without them. And so it is better to make them direct and open.

Second, **theories** are not something gruesome. There is no horror, no unsurmountable threshold involved. They are not really difficult to understand once you accept them as necessary and you start trying. And in science, we can’t do without them. Theories are not something scary but simply general assumptions about how factor a causes factor b. That is what science is about: **explaining things**. That sounds natural, but it is not. Many students assume that describing things is science, too. But even when we try to describe something we again cannot avoid using a guiding assumption as a roadmap (what data to look at, what cases to

compare etc.). And secondly, most phenomena in social / political sciences are already available as data, and there is no need to re-collect them. But when they are not available, the endeavor to do that is way too big for a student's thesis.

The following pages are on how to use theories, and on what the most relevant theories are. For this purpose, it is useful to introduce a concept which helps to sort out different theories. This is the concept of **levels of analysis** (loa), which means: on what analytical level are we working when analyzing a given problem? It is obvious that when we are moving quickly back and forth from one level to another, we finally do not really know which is the most relevant one. So we first have to define a loa, and then stick to it until we formally may want to change it to another loa.

There are different suggestions re. which, how many loas are required. This is what I propose (and will stick to):

- 1st level:** individual actor/ agent / decision maker
- 2nd level:** societal / social/ group/ transnational/ subnational actors ("domestic" sphere)
- 3rd level:** unit / state/ government
- 4th level:** supranational entities
- 5th level:** global/ international system.

These are 2 more levels than suggested by Kenneth Waltz in his influential introduction on "images" (levels) of IR analysis<sup>1</sup>. But I maintain that this is useful and legitimate. By the way: you see that we can be creative with theories. We can develop them. We may touch and modify them.

Now before we move on to the theories, there is another concept that requires explanation (and then will be used in combination with the loas): **variables**. "Variables" is a term for groups of factors in "real life" that cause other factors, or are being caused by other factors. There are two basic types of variables: **dependent variables** (DV) – those factors being caused – and **independent variables** – the

causing factors (IV's). There are more groups of factors in the literature on methods, but these two core groups will suffice here.

Obviously, variables must be able to vary; if not, they cannot serve as variables. So we have to check in every instance when we define factors as variables if they have the potential to vary. Also, variables rarely can be observed directly. So we have to look at them on a somewhat more concrete level, namely that of **indicators** or proxies. There are many relevant indicators for IR questions for which we do have very good data, often in data banks and on the internet (demographic data, the Human Development Index, data on FDI, on conflicts and wars, on migration flows etc.). A good variable that cannot be operationalized with indicators is almost worthless.

Once we have defined variables and know how to measure them, we are able to formulate a **hypothesis**; this is a statement re. how a given independent variable shapes the defined dependent variable. There should be as many hypotheses as IV's<sup>2</sup>. Basically, a hypothesis is a less generalized, i.e. more concrete theory; or a theory applied to a precise case.

Each of the IR theories to be described below can be classified by looking at its assumptions re. on which the global politics phenomena take place, and from which they should be best explained.

But before we address the so-called IR theories directly there is another step we should make, and this is on a **meta-level of reasoning**. It is not "clear" automatically how we are thinking, or how we should do that. Actually, there is a massive amount of literature exploring this field of how we "think", and on how we interact with "reality". These two terms are not self-explaining. Neurobiologists, evolutionary biologists, linguists, philosophers and other people in other disciplines have a fascinating, but also a hard time making "sense" of our way of "making sense".

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<sup>1</sup> Waltz, Kenneth: Man, the State and War, New York 1959.

<sup>2</sup> For more details on variables and theories, see van Evera, Stephen: Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science, Ithaca NY 1997, p. 7-49.

There are two basic ways of reasoning, and accordingly two main groups of researchers. This constitutes the important divide between the **two big camps** – positivists and constructivists. The decisive difference between them is how their representatives look at “reality”. While positivists maintain that reality does exist “outside” of their work (is exogenous), and that one can catch it by designing research procedures in a proper way (or at least that it makes sense to assume that we can do that), constructivists deny these assumptions or at least say that there is no evidence to assume the accessibility of reality. While this divide may seem quite academic – we all make reality assumptions or we could not act daily in our respective contexts – this academic debate on the nature of reality is very important indeed. And, most probably, it cannot be resolved in a convincing intersubjective way. So at the end of the day this is one point where you – we all – have to take a normative decision, i.e. a decision that in itself cannot be legitimized by science, but it rather is derived from plausibility, norms, and values.

**Positivists** take the position that there are actors which have preferences and interests and that they act accordingly to achieve them. All these elements – actors, preferences and interests – can be described and analyzed. Also, how these actors act and shape events, and processes, can be tracked. There is an inbuilt tension between actors / agents and structures / institutions, but basically it is an interaction that can be handled productively.

**Constructivists** deny most or all of this. They say that all preferences and interests are, or may be, fluent and shifting, and that they are all subject to changes during the process of social interaction and also of research. Therefore, one cannot take them for granted and certainly not as a starting point and a stable orientation for research.

When we look at these metatheories from the position of loas, we can see that loas in themselves are basically an invention by positivists. Positivists can act from all of the above mentioned loas. Constructivists either would avoid framing research questions in loas, or they would say that their main loa is intersubjectivity – no matter where it occurs.

For this working paper on IR theories and their application, you will detect that there is NO principal decision on which of these two ways of thinking, and doing IR is “better”. This is something you have to decide by yourself. But there is a strong tendency, at least from my side, to accept **positivist assumptions** pragmatically for practical purposes. Using them will allow you to build meaningful and practical research designs (study proposals). Using them also will allow you to be prepared for most of the practical contexts of your professional positions you later will apply for, and work in.

The core of many positivist, actor-oriented approaches is a rationality assumption. The methodical principle behind it is called **rational choice**. That means that actors do act rationally NOT in the sense of acting reasonably or “good”, but they act in a goal-oriented manner. The actions are input-rational, not necessarily out-put reasonable. The actors have the same pattern of doing things – by the way, in all spheres of life. They have fixed and mostly stable preferences (like survival, reproduction, resource accumulation, security/ protection, maybe cognitive consistency, see below) and act in a given situation to achieve their preferences. So they are utility maximizers (and still can be risk-prone or risk-averse). They screen the information at hand and then arrange the available options hierarchically, and act accordingly. While there certainly are limitations of information, of processing, of resource availability and of other constraints (like rules / institutions), the basic modus operandi is goal-oriented (a statement constructivists would attack).

This principle is supposedly universal and across cultures, disciplines and activities. The economic success of a product, the political success of a political candidate and the international success of a state are all dependent on competition and on selections made by many individual actors: by consumers on the market, voters in elections, and by other states’ behavior in conflicts. While the outcome may (and often will) differ from the intentions of most or even all those actors, the **organizational principle** of how they make their decisions, and that their preferences are their roadmap for action is relevant for analyzing and even predicting politics (and other social activities).

Positivists and rat-choice proponents are supposedly particularly effective in addressing decision theories (acting under / within constraints of a given situation), crisis behavior (Cuba, Berlin, 9/11 crises etc.), games (strategic action under constraints imposed by other actors / interdependent choices) and when taking up collective action problems. A sub-field of positivism / rat-choice is game theories.

**But this is not a statement on the eternal merits of positivism. We – and I – just don't know. Constructivists are very strong in some important regards. First of all, they flatly make clear the inbuilt and quite often (though not here) hidden assumptions of positivist thinking. They can indicate and delegitimize the power potential of dominant positivist discourses. They can show that, and why, researchers are not neutral but active participants of discourse construction. They can demonstrate the crucial role of communication and texts for social sciences, politics, and IR. So this is definitely a very relevant method of reasoning (and questioning hegemonic ways of reasoning). They focus on topics like the role of social factors, norms and practices, and the importance of cultural aspects, habits and traditions.**

Post-positivists put forward relevant questions to positivists and rat-choice proponents: Do actors have sufficient information to make their choices? What exactly does „rational“ mean? Is there a universal definition of „utility“? Is the assumption of exogenously set preferences correct? How about acting in situations of uncertainty? What about shifting (unstable) interests / priorities, especially under the influence of communication? Are there no non-hierarchical, cooperative situations? Can they be achieved by communication?

Constructivists also have an impressive record of thinking behind – or underneath – apparent “reason” and the dominant narrative of modernity. They came up with the first skeptical questions toward modernity after World War I, the next principal questions after World War II (“Dialectics of Enlightenment”), they used the power-deconstructing writings of Foucault, the text-deconstructions of Derrida and Baudrillard, and the discussions around risk-societies and new risks in these days of the early 21st century. Since we all are in a situation where modernity is attacked on different fronts – from religious fundamentalists of all sorts, from disoriented and

dislocated and discouraged social groups, and is discredited by ad-hocist policies, constructivists have to be aware of the potentials of their de-legitimizing potentials of their legitimate discourse critique.

There are also tough questions for constructivists. Is there anything beyond the „subject“? Is there more than to ramble and to waffle? Are there any rules of discourse, any rule enforcement, anything beyond „anything goes“? What exactly can we do to explain ir / global politics applying these critical tools?

To sum up, meta-theories propose more general assumptions about  
... the world and the nature of objects (ontology),  
... how we know that and what we know about this reality (epistemology), and  
... how to get (to) this knowledge (methodology).

While positivists stand in the tradition of enlightenment, modernity and rationality, constructivists mostly would not deny the merits of these projects (or narratives) but rather focus on their limits, and on the dangers of exclusiveness.

#### **A brief dictionary for understanding meta-theories:**

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b><u>Ontology:</u></b>     | <b>A branch of science theory concerned with the nature and relations of being, or things which exist.</b>   |
| <b><u>Epistemology:</u></b> | <b>A branch of science theory concerned with knowledge or ways of knowing, particularly in the context of the limits or validity of the various ways of knowing.</b> |
| <b><u>Hermeneutics:</u></b> | <b>The science of interpretation and explanation; exegesis.</b>  |
| <b><u>Heuristics:</u></b>   | <b>Strategies of how to search for solutions.</b>  |

Historically, there were some so-called great debates in IR development. These debates served, and serve, as organizing principles for the relevant epistemological conflicts being addressed in and between university departments, research journals and, to some extent, the media.

These debates, as they are mostly portrayed, were those between

- idealists / institutionalists and realists (since World War I),
- behaviorists / empiricists and hermeneutical approaches (since the 60s),

-- and then between all positivist and the others (de/constructivist, reflectivist, gender-oriented) positions, creating “linguistic” and “cultural” turns.

Now we will present five groups or IR theories that do generally follow positivist rules.

They are mainly interested in the following **questions**:

- How are political decisions generated by actors?
- How do we explain political outcomes produced by these decisions?
- Under what circumstances is cooperation possible, and when and why does it fail?
- How do rules / institutions / regimes work?



## REALISM/ NEO-REALISM

There is no one single coherent definition of “realism.” There are at least two main brands: classical realism, and neo-realism. Classical realism was not very precise in defining its core assumptions. But a certain understanding of “man” –human beings – , human nature, and of their eternal aspirations for power played a crucial role. This proposition looked increasingly odd, and in the 60s and 70s classical realism was sidelined. Apparently, more recent findings of evolutionary biology may lead to a renaissance of this concept, in combination with cognitive approaches (see below).

Some 25 years ago, classical realism was mostly replaced by neo-realism. The original thinker behind neo-realism was Kenneth Waltz. Neo-realism was presented as an alternative to all other IR theories because it rested on “real” scientific assumptions. While this claim was and is questionable, neo-realism became quite influential. It rests on the assumption that states behave in the framework of the international system in the same way as producers and consumers do in economic markets. The “organizing” principle in both cases is, according to Waltz, anarchy, and the players behave accordingly. First of all they develop survival strategies.

For a long time, international politics was defined and understood as politics between states. Accordingly, the discipline of IR required the existence and interaction of and between states. Consequently, reflections on the state are quite old: theories of the state, state-based law, etc. But we should note that clear definitions of “the” state always were not so easy to construct.

The modern state was the core element of the so-called Westphalian system (1648-1991), but it was preceded by the ancient Greek polis and other state-like entities. Attributes of states were the existence of an central administration, territoriality, internal sovereignty (esp. power monopoly), social homogenization, external sovereignty, citizenship/ Staatsbürgerschaft, national identity, borders (indicating distinct domestic/ foreign spheres), and specific state symbols.

**Loas:** Realists were not quite specific here, but mostly they used the 1st level to explain outcomes on the 3rd level (2nd in Waltz’s terminology). Neorealists focus on

the 5th (in their parlance - 3rd) level, especially on anarchy, to explain system-level behavior (states, i.e. 3rd level in our terminology).

**Core ideas** of realism are that the environment of states is anarchic and, in a way, dangerous. States are understood as unitary actors. Governments striving for survival had to follow the principle of self-help. This makes cooperation neither likely nor stable and, therefore, not reasonable. Another central realist assumption is that states are only interested in relative gains (compared to other rival states), not in absolute advantages.

**Core thinkers** of classical realism were Thucydides, Machiavelli and Hobbes. They were followed in the 20th century by Morgenthau, Schelling and others. Neo-realism is represented by authors like Waltz and Mearsheimer.

A decisive difference between them is that classical realism rested mostly on assumptions re. the 1st level, and how that affected the 2nd (state) level, whereas neo-realism focuses on the 3rd level to explain the behavior of states on the 2nd level.

**Critique:** Today, in global times, it is more problematic than ever to maintain that states are the only, or even the main players on the globe. Also, it seems that realists were not particularly successful in predicting – or even explaining - the end of the Cold War.

Also, the unitary actor thesis is hardly “realistic”. Still, there are some interesting contributions from neo-realist thinkers. The prediction in the early 1990s that the bipolar Cold War system was more stable than the new (dis) order that replaced it has some merit.

#### **Tasks for work grouping:**

1. Try to model your region / conflict first with a realist and then with a neo-realist approach.
2. Why does anyone still engage in nation building if states are eroding?
3. Are realists and neorealists normative?

## INSTITUTIONALISM

There is some confusion re. how to label this approach. Suggestions are: institutionalism, functionalism, idealism... Others talk about „neoliberal institutionalism. “ For our purpose here, I call this approach institutionalism. It is very close to regime theories.

**Definition:** What is institutionalism about? This approach wants to explain cooperation between (state) actors and coordination of their actions. It also addresses the core question of in/stability and in/security. Institutionalists maintain that cooperation between states / governments is possible and may be effective.

**Loa:** Institutionalists try to explain 3rd level performances from a 3rd or 4th level perspective.

**Core ideas:** It probably makes sense to start with a look at institutions in general. What are they? Institutions can be best understood as rules of the game. They may be formal or informal, legal or illegal, effective or not. Rules labeled as institutions are constraints – and opportunities – for actors. They should not be confused with organizations.

Institutions are formal and informal rules that constrain individual behavior and shape human interaction (Douglass North).

The concept of institutions was developed by economists and constituted the approach of neo-institutionalism. Increasingly, it is applied by political scientists as well. Related terms and concepts are transaction costs, principal-agent relations, institutional change, path dependency and regimes.

Regimes are the institutions of IR. They are sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given area of international relations (Stephen Krasner).

**Basic assumptions** of institutionalist thinkers for international relations are the following. Institutionalists have a similar understanding of the international system (anarchic) and the state (unitary) as realists. But they are saying that the state can be embedded in rules and act in such a way that its inherent behavior – utility maximizing strategies leading to permanent instability for everyone (security dilemma) – can be overcome by utility maximizing – leading to increasing interdependence b/w states, thereby producing stability and cooperation. A compatible way of reasoning is that states accept rules / regimes even in those cases when their short-term effects are detrimental for them because (only) this guarantees that other participants also will accept these rules in the future. So the potential negative future impact of defection today - the so-called shadow of the future – ensures rule acceptance now.

Institutionalists realize that modern societies are characterized by complex schemes of division of labor. This makes them vulnerable for dysfunctions, for example by attacks. So governments may develop an interest in intertwining and integrating some of their functional spheres with other societies – resulting in networks, and in increasing mutual vulnerability.

These kind of functional approaches are not necessarily idealistic (an early 20th century term for the assumptions that wars can be avoided by international institutions). It is especially worthwhile to note that we do not need to call for altruistic principles, but rather expect common interests because there are common institutions and regimes leading to reduced TACs and making defections difficult.

So regimes and institutions can be useful, according to their proponents, because they do not rest on appeals and values, but because they rather serve mutual interests. Therefore, they can be integrated into interests, or even preferences, of state actors – who expect utilities from regimes.

**Basic thinkers/ proponents:** The economist and Nobel laureate Douglass North is the most influential thinker on institutions. But there is a whole school of neo-institutionalists. Stephen Krasner coined the leading definition for IR regimes.

**Critique:** Institutionalists have problems in explaining the breakdown of institutions, or their ineffectiveness. When observing rules is such a convincing concept, why is there not more rule-observance in global politics?

**Tasks for work grouping:**

1. What relevant institutions can you detect in your region? In what policy fields?
2. Do international laws and regimes constrain (or enable) the behavior of actors? How?

## THIRD (FIFTH) IMAGE APPROACHES

There are at least nine different approaches explaining processes and events on levels 1 to 3/5 (1 to x) with third image causation. There are more or less Marxist theories, like Imperialism (Lenin), social hegemony (Gramsci), world systems theories (Immanuel Wallerstein), and the critical theory of world orders (Robert Cox).

Then we do have non-Marxist approaches which belong into the 5th level group, namely international Political Economy (IPE, Susan Strange et al.), neo-realism (Kenneth Waltz and others), some globalization theories, some global culture theories (Samuel Huntington), and some game theories that can be applied to IR.

**Loa:** All these approaches look from a 5th level (formerly 3rd level) to explain outcomes on other levels.

These approaches differ significantly in their relevance today. Not all of them can be explained here. Globalization is one of the currently most important fields of analysis, IPE as well. Neo-Realism was addressed in connection with Realism. Civilization has to be dealt with in the culture session. Imperialism is „out. “

Gramscianism is not of much relevance today in IR.

**Core ideas:** There are some central ideas more or less common to most 3rd level approaches. Obviously, the relevant level of analysis is the 3rd level. For most of these theories, the world system is primarily characterized by global capitalism. The world system is, so to say, the playground of world capitalism, and is being shaped and structured by world capitalism. Because of the inherent dynamics of wc, the ws is „injust“. It is heterogeneous, and the decisive marker is the capability of actors / states to belong to the „core. “

There is a social dimension of interaction. Relations between social groups are as – or even more – important, as diplomatic relations between states and governments.

One important theoretical source of many 3rd level approaches is Marxism. This started with the critique of imperialism and was further developed into Leninism. These theoretical currents were more / or less popular (at different times?) depending on crisis situations. Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony was a quite sophisticated attempt to adapt Marxism to the conditions in the middle decades of the 20th century. He included the concept of culture into his thinking.

Another influential theoretical background came from history, particularly from the French group around the journal "Annales". The historical Annales school was focusing not on individuals, emperors, or single events, but suggesting a multiple time model: the *longue duree*, medium term time frames (*conjunctures*) and events.

**Core thinkers:** These are primarily Immanuel Wallerstein and Robert Cox. Wallerstein is probably the most influential thinker in the group of 3rd level approaches to IR. He developed a concept called the world system approach. This is an all-encompassing idea operating on the level of world empires and world economies. The world system we are living in is determined by the global economy, namely: the capitalist economy. This global capitalist economy produces three different, but also interrelated spaces: cores, peripheries, and semi-peripheries.

Core members are characterized by democratic governments, relatively high wages, the import of resources, the export of manufactured goods, and efficient welfare services. Periphery members are characterized by the absence of these qualities. Semi-periphery regions are an intermediate space between the two others. A central question here is, of course, if and how a political entity can "migrate" from one group to another.

In addition to this spatial organization, there is also a temporal dimension of world systems such as cycles, trends, waves, crises etc. The role of states in this system is important.

Robert Cox is another good example for interesting 3rd level approaches.

He is quite reflective on theorizing: He discriminates between problem-solving theories, and critical theories.

The basic analytical category for Cox is historical structures. This term is defined as a „framework for action“, as a „particular configuration of forces“. In any given historical structure, writes Cox, there are three categories of forces which interact: Ideas, institutions, and material capabilities<sup>3</sup>. These social structures are „located“ or operative on („applied to“) three different levels: Social forces, states and world orders<sup>4</sup>. This concept developed by Cox is quite productive. He demonstrates what can be done with 3rd level thinking.

The most dominant approaches today are related to globalization as a process. The reduction of the meaning of borders, the changes on the regulatory capabilities of governments and states, the increasing importance of flows and scapes, ongoing ways of compression of time and space, digitalization and many other variables and phenomena have certainly a major impact on global politics. There are too many authors and writings on this subject to enumerate them here. For more details and analysis, I suggest to turn to the papers and books written by Appadurai, Castells, McGrew and Scholte, among others.

**Critique:** Wallerstein has problems predicting if, and under what conditions states may move up-or downwards in his hierarchy. Cox shows implicitly that “adequate” theories are exposed to the danger of “overcomplexity.”

### **Tasks for work grouping:**

*Please apply Wallerstein, Cox or Game theory to your region/ conflict.*

1. What is “core,” what is – “periphery?” How can a unit move upward / downward?
2. What are the historical structures that frame the playground for the relevant actors?

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<sup>3</sup> Cox, Robert W.: Social Forces, States and World Orders. Beyond the International Relations Theory, in: Keohane, Robert O.: Neorealism and its Critics, New York: Columbia University Press 1986, p.218.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p.221.



## THE LIBERAL/ PLURALISTIC AND DOMESTIC STRUCTURE APPROACHES

The analytical focus of liberalism / pluralism shifts toward domestic structures and actors: What is their impact on state behavior? What is their own transnational role?

In this case, the dependent variables are, still, aspects of international or world politics. But the domestic context (structures) will be brought in as independent variables.

**Loas:** All these approaches start at the 2nd (domestic / societal) level to explain causal effects on the 3rd (state) and 4th levels.

This is different from explaining domestic events / processes with international factors (like globalization). And this is different, too, from explaining state behavior by system-level qualities (anarchy; distribution of capabilities / information).

### Liberalism

Liberalism is not just one concept. It has broad implications and many different meanings. Liberalism in economics is different from political liberalism in the U.S. also, liberal parties are quite different (see Germany, Austria and Russia).

In an IR context, liberalism means that democratic states don't fight each other – this is the theory of democratic peace. But note: democracies do fight non-democracies.

The basic tenet of liberal approaches in IR is that „state-society relations - the relationship of states to the domestic and transnational social context in which they are embedded - have a fundamental impact on state behavior in world politics“ (Andrew Moravcsik).

There are important implications to draw from this kind of reasoning. This approach is not compatible with states as „black boxes,“ states as effective resource mobilizers, states as “containers,” states as unitary actors, states as rational decision makers (though it may be compatible with rat. choice).

Other implications are that societies and social actors are the relevant level / object of analysis. They act and interact, they build coalitions, they lobby, they put pressure on bureaucracies, they act – collectively or individually.

This is what being „liberal“ or „plural“ means in this IR context.

**Core assumptions:** There is a primacy of societal actors, of individuals and social groups. Political actors are dependent on election cycles (and, in general, on time). The proper definition of their interests is central.

„States ... are not (unitary) actor(s) but representative institution(s) constantly subject to capture and recapture, construction and reconstruction by coalitions of social actors.“ (Moravcsik 1997, 518)

### **Ideational liberalism**

This approach is about the role of ideas and ideologies. It looks at societal preferences concerning the scope and content of a „nation.“ It is interested in the commitment of individuals and social groups to particular ideas and political institutions (regime types).

### **Commercial liberalism**

This approach is about the relevance of patterns of market incentives for domestic and transnational economic actors. The matter here is not only free trade. The underlying thesis is more general: The greater the economic benefits for private actors, the greater their incentive to press governments to facilitate such transactions.

### **Republican liberalism**

This interpretation addresses the mode of domestic political representation which determines whose social preferences are institutionally privileged. Rent-seeking is an important mode of action in this framework.

## **Two-level games**

Another important school in this field is the two-level games, presented by Robert Putnam. This theory suggests a close linkage between international negotiations and domestic support. Whatever the results on the international “table” (level 1) between two different teams (representing two states) are, they will be accepted and become operational only after they have been “ratified” in the respective countries by domestic procedures (level 2). An important concept here is that of winsets, indicating the sum of all possible results at table1.

## **Transnationalism**

This concept perceives social actors as transnational (non-state) actors and players on the world politics arena. Their prospects to intrude other societies depend on those societies and their domestic structures.

Domestic actors have a „primacy.“ They act in a way that is goal-oriented, risk-averse and rational. Politics (including external) is the result of domestic bargaining. The basic social actors are relatively autonomous.

States and governments are not independent entities and actors, but representatives of different and particular interests. Those sub-state - interests aim at power and resources, via coalition building, elections and the media.

**Critique:** While generally quite plausible and strong in explanatory power, “liberal” approaches require research strategies which are complex. They may require case studies, and they are necessarily comparative.

You never succeed in identifying a domestic structure / coalition once and forever – they are permanently shifting.

## **Work group tasks:**

1. What domestic structures are decisive for your region / conflict?
2. If you analyze the recent events in your region - is there anything which **cannot** be explained by domestic structures, constellations, interests?

## COGNITIVE APPROACHES

This IR-theory is located at the first level of analysis. It may be said that it suggests a *homo psychologicus*.

What are cognitive approaches? They are „reflexive“, they „consider the role of policymakers' beliefs and images,“ and they challenge „much of Western thought and practice premised on the assumption of individual rationality“ (Rosati).

Given the media landscape as it is now, individual decision makers are often seen, or portrayed, as the central movers of politics. In that case, problematic personal histories may cause huge havoc in IR. The apparent presence of these cases and examples and their permanent availability makes alleged idiosyncrasies of decision-makers easy prey for the media.

Why are cognitive approaches needed or popular? The performance, and the behavior, of decision maker's, governments, bureaucrats etc. often seem difficult to explain in rational (goal-oriented) terms. The more complex an environment, or a task, or a challenge, the less „hard“ and reliable the facts and data.

Under strict time constraints, „psychological factors“ seem to gain in importance.

Basic assumptions of this approach are: Politicians act because of a specific social, ethnical, or cultural background. Politicians are, at least sometimes, characterized by (religious, ideological, other) obsessions. Or even, in some cases, politicians are „crazy“ and act irresponsibly.

**Guiding questions** of this approach: How do decision-makers view the world? What shapes their convictions and world views? But, first of all: What is the effect of decision-makers' perceptions and world views on IR/ WP?

**Basic assumptions:** The „subjective factor“ in decision-makers' reasoning is so dominant that it shapes their political actions. Other shaping factors are embedded into mindsets. Consequently, their actions cannot be explained by positivist approaches.

Cognitive approaches are interested in (seemingly) non-rational factors related to the mindsets of decision makers: particularities like world views, beliefs, specific decision-making habits and stress-coping potentials

Subgroups. Important directions for research in the framework of cognitive approaches are works related to images of the enemy / mirror images; the role of national stereotypes; the role of public opinion; and the role of perceptions and misperceptions. We will not describe these interpretations here in detail.

**Operational codes:** The concept of cognitive consistency is an overall coherent set of beliefs about the nature of political life. Among them, there are philosophical beliefs (on historical cycles, on the character of human nature etc.), and instrumental beliefs, related to strategies and tactic (risk-taking, etc.).

**Cognitive mapping:** This approach is related to specific beliefs, and their interconnectedness, in decision-makers' minds. It tries to represent a person's assertions about something, and it maintains there are stages – cognitive steps – of politicians' mental procedures.

**Attribution (explanation) theory:** This theory addresses attribution errors and biases. It tries to explain individual behavior with external / situational causes. It furthermore assumes strategies like accepting successes for oneself, blaming others for problems.

**Social cognition and schemata theories:** The basic assumption of this theory is that people do not like to change, once they have established beliefs / patterns. They screen their environment, and perceive data through their existing lenses. This is especially true in complex and unstable situations, and during informational overflow. The preferred strategy in such cases is Reductionism.

**Some findings and results:** It seems that there are strong indications that the organizational principle of cognitive consistency is important: „...individuals make

sense of the world by relying on key beliefs and strive to maintain consistency between their beliefs<sup>5</sup>.”

It also has been established that decision-makers try avoid (new) information not compatible with established assumptions / views and, therefore, requiring re-thinking. This makes common-sense assumptions such as „more information and proper consulting improve politics“ questionable.

Some research results imply that the effects of impacts, information, and propaganda are quite diverse, and strongly depend on contexts / environments.

Positive emotions toward „messengers“ and the personal surroundings are important. „Incoming information ... gets interpreted in accordance with an individual's existing central beliefs and predispositions.“ (Rosati)

Perceptions, patterns, idiosyncrasies, habits, exiting maps etc. are of utmost importance for the functioning of dm's, and for hb's in general.

**Critique:** New results from brain and neurological research imply that the reliability of our perceptions and memories is highly questionable. Similar problems with accuracy – itself a problematic concept – occur with our memories. Another crucial problem is operationalization. How can we reliably “open up the brains” of politicians and other actors to track their procedures?

### **Questions for work-grouping:**

1. Look for obvious examples of dm's decisions that only may be explained by their *beliefs, operational codes* etc.
2. Name some typical belief systems of decision makers in your region.  
How – if at all - could learning be initiated?
3. Imagine you are a newly appointed foreign minister.  
What would you do to avoid cognitive traps?

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<sup>5</sup> Rosati, Jerel A.: A Cognitive Approach to the Study of Foreign Policy, in: Rosati, Jerel A. / Hagan, Joe D. / Sampson, Martin W. III (eds.): Foreign Policy Restructuring - How Governments Respond to Global Change. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press 1994, p. 52.

# ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

BY PETER DYLLICK-BRENNINGER AND CHRISTOF MAUERSBERGER

## AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ISRAELI-PALASTINIAN CONFLICT<sup>6</sup>, FOLLOWING WALTZ' LEVELS OF ANALYSIS<sup>7</sup>.



Source: Central Intelligence Agency,  
[http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle\\_east\\_and\\_asia/israel\\_pol01.jpg](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/israel_pol01.jpg)

The conflict between Israelis (originally Zionists) and Palestinians over the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea dates back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Given this long history of the present dispute, a comprehensive introduction would provide enough material to fill book after book (some of those who have already been written can be found in the appendix). The task of our work group was to apply various theories of international relations to the conflict. Since these theories can easily be categorized by their level of analysis, the

following introduction will sketch out the most important actors on the three levels defined by Kenneth Waltz.

Here, only the actors relevant in the discussions of our workgroup will be introduced.

An important question that has to be discussed first is whether Palestine can be seen as a state or not. This is crucial, since most of the theories of international relations are actually theories of relations among states. Palestine is certainly not a state in a narrow sense. It has neither its own territory nor is it sovereign. However, it is still useful to work with the assumption that Palestine is a state for several reasons. The Palestinians are, at least partly, autonomous from Israel following the Oslo I (1993)

<sup>6</sup> The information given here describes the situation as of summer 2004. Although the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is changing constantly, certain general patterns remain much the same. Especially the relations of actors and the structures on the various levels of analysis change slowly. This makes this introduction worth reading, even after a landmark event such as Arafat's death.

<sup>7</sup> Waltz, Kenneth: Man, the State and War. A Theoretical Analysis, New York 1959

and II (1995) agreements. These treaties led to the establishment of the Palestinian Authority (PA) which ever since has represented and governed the Palestinian people living in Gaza and the West Bank. The PA is also negotiating with Israel eye to eye. This diplomatic practice seems to be the most important argument for taking Palestine as a state. Another one seems to be somewhat tautological: Most of the theories that we applied, and which do require states as actors, did produce sensible results. Considering Palestine as a state is therefore useful, but one should keep in mind that it is no more than an assumption: Palestine is not, at least for now, a proper state.

The *international level*, or third image, takes a look at the global context. This level can be divided into sub-groups: relevant third-party states, transnational actors and international organization; the relations between states; and the so called world system. The relevant states and other transnational actors are mainly those involved in the peace efforts (USA, Russia, Egypt, EU, UN and the Arab League) and those who are at least supposed to support Palestinian terrorism (Iran and Syria). Looking at the relevant relations between states, the most important one seems to be between Israel and the USA. Looking back on a long history of support, the USA stands firmly with Israel. A comparable partner, either by power or strength of support, cannot be found on the side of the Palestinians. The EU, and especially France as one of its most important members, seem to be strong supporters of the Palestinians. The Arab nations, however, are not as strongly on the Palestinian side as one might expect. Both Israelis and Palestinians consider themselves isolated from the rest of the world and as victims of the respective other side. From a systemic perspective, referring to the constellation of power, it is obvious that Israel is much closer to the center, while the Palestinians are closer to the periphery. Israel's military power and economic strength make it a natural regional center, although it is relatively isolated from its surroundings. The Palestinians in contrast do not have any military power, lack natural resources and are economically underdeveloped.

Most theories try to tackle international relations on the second or *state level*. The various approaches however use different perspectives on the state. Sub-national actors are at the focus of the liberal theories, the political system is the key for institutionalism and political culture and society play an important role in constructivist



approaches.

Who are the sub-national actors relevant to the conflict? The workgroup focused on the two major Israeli parties, Likud and Labor, the settlers' council and the peace movement for Israel. On the Palestinian side, we focused on the Fatah, the Palestinian Authority (PA), Hamas, and the Islamic Djihad as the most influential domestic actors. With regard to the political system, there is a clear difference between the two sides. Israel is a parliamentary democracy, which is marked by a wide variety of parties represented in the Knesset (parliament). This produces coalitions including several different parties, which in turn lead to unstable governments. The high frequency of national elections and coalition re-building is an excellent indicator for this instability. Although the PA, i.e. the ruling body for the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, is supposed to be democratic, under the reign of Yassir Arafat it resembled a typical authoritarian regime. Given this structure, the PA government is highly stable. However, militant groups like Hamas or Islamic Djihad pose a credible threat to the rule of the established government from outside of the institutional setting.

From a social and cultural perspective, Israel and Palestine are just as different. The society of Israel is highly fragmented due to the varying origins of its citizens. Zionism and Judaism, as uniting ideologies, loose their importance as a result of the effects of the post-industrial era. The high number of Russian immigrants, who came to Israel mainly for financial reasons, increases this problem even further. On top of that, the Israeli government implemented harsh social reforms in the last years which increased social inequality. Economically, Israel is well positioned on the world market with leading companies in arms, information technology and biotech. However, the second intifada (starting in September 2000) did hurt this position. The Palestinian society is much less diversified than Israel's. It is, in spite of its difficult position, highly educated, yet the economical basis is still mainly agricultural, which is also a result of the occupation. The curfews, an everyday reality during the second intifada, hurt the Palestinian immensely. The hardships of the intensified occupation led to an increase in the importance of religion, i.e. Islam.

The first level looks at *individuals* who are relevant for international relations. On the Israeli side, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is the most influential figure in the conflict, since he has the last word on all decisions. On the Palestinian side, Yassir Arafat has

an even stronger position (as of summer 2004). He is not only chairman of Fatah and the PLO, but most importantly President of the PA (Palestinian Authority). In contrast to Sharon, he does not need to fear defeat in elections. Another relevant figure for the Palestinians is Sheikh Yassin, the spiritual leader of Hamas. Given the importance of his party (or rather movement), he has a high moral standing and the power to influence public opinion and therefore politics by using this public opinion and by directing violence (i.e. suicide bombings). On the regional level, the most important individual is Hosni Mubarak, President of Egypt. Egypt was the first Arab country accepting Israel as a state, Mubarak himself pushed for a ceasefire on several occasions. Since he is respected by both sides, he plays a vital role in most negotiating efforts. From an international perspective, given the military, financial and political power of their nation, the most important person is certainly the President of the United States of America, Bill Clinton until January 2001 followed by George W. Bush.

Although this introduction is not only a snapshot of the situation of summer 2004, but also overtly brief, it should have made clear how different the two sides of the conflict are. For more information, we would like to suggest the following sources:

#### **Web Resources:**

***<http://www.haaretz.com>***

Online version of the English translation of Israel's number one quality newspaper. Very up to date.

***<http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/meast/archive/>***

Archive of CNN's Middle East coverage.

***<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/14380>***

Very interesting article on the negotiations at Camp David 2000, written by co-negotiators.

***<http://www.merip.org/>***

Website of the "Middle East Research and Information Project" - a think tank with a clear focus on the conflict. Excellent background essays.

***<http://www.btselem.org/>***

The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories. Good source to get an impression of the situation in the territories.

**<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/mideast/mideast.htm>**

A collection of all relevant legal documents relevant for the conflict (UN Resolutions, Treaties, etc.).

**<http://www.memri.de>**

Middle East Media Research Institute: Offers a newsletter in German/English with translated articles from mostly Arab media (newspapers).

**<http://www.world-newspapers.com/palestine.html> and <http://www.palestine-net.com/news/>**

Two lists of Palestinian (online) newspapers.

## **INSTITUTIONALISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT**

There are several regimes or institutions, formal and informal, relevant to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict<sup>8</sup>. We focused our discussion on the Roadmap, as an international regime dealing with our conflict. The "Performance-based Roadmap to a Permanent Two-State Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Crisis" had been presented on September 17, 2002 by the middle-east quartet (including the USA, Russia, the UN and the EU). It put down three stages for achieving peace on the basis of a two-state solution. On the first stage, the Palestinians had to stop terrorism, reform the Palestinian Authority and hold elections, while the Israelis were to withdraw troops and freeze the building of settlements. On a second stage, a Palestinian state should have been founded, while an international peace conference should have been staged and international monitoring of compliance with the Roadmap should have been put into place. On the third and final stage, a final peace treaty should have been signed, solving the most explosive questions, such as the status of Jerusalem, the refugees and the settlements. As one might already know, stages two and three were never implemented and even the low-key stage one failed over time. However, looking back at this attempt seemed to us a good example for regime theory. The fundamental question our workgroup discussed was whether the Roadmap enabled or restricted the behavior of the parties involved.

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<sup>8</sup> Very important regimes for the two societies are certainly the Torah and the Koran, having a huge impact on the lives of the people. We decided against discussing this further, because those two regimes act primarily on their respective side and are not regimes mutually agreed upon by both parties.

First of all, we tried to grasp the features of the Roadmap making it an international regime. Every regime consists of a set of principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures, and so does the Roadmap. Its principles are peace and security as the highest values, but also sovereignty of the people. The Roadmap furthermore sets non-violence, democracy and transparency as its norms. The rules of the regime are seen in the agreement to finally end terror, occupation and the building of settlements and to reform the Palestinian Authority. A decision-making procedure was designed and implemented by the middle-east quartet, i.e. USA, EU, Russia and the UN. Besides all these features, the Roadmap is neither an actor by itself nor has it an organizational body. So it does fulfil the criteria of a regime perfectly.

According to regime theory, the behaviour of the actors should converge around this setting. Consequently the question to be answered is about the Roadmap's impact on this conflict and how it worked. The most important aspect to any (successful) regime is the reduction of transaction costs for both parties. The Roadmap set common goals, defined the actors participating in the process and the decision-making procedures and freed the delegations to a great extent from discussing these matters over and over again. But still, critics argued that exactly those matters were not defined very precisely. For example, the first stage did not foresee a monitoring of compliance. However, the Roadmap supplied the two sides with information and therefore increased the willingness to cooperate, which is probably the most important aspect of this regime. It clearly defined *cooperation* and *defection* and hence stabilized expectations of both sides. Additionally, the pay-off-matrix was altered through this definition by increasing the costs of defection. This was the case, because both parties feared a loss of reputation, being disadvantageous in the upcoming negotiations and in talks on financial aid, being vital to both sides. The three stages laid out by the regime is a means to overcome the Prisoner's Dilemma by including the "shadow of the future". This means bringing the iterating character of the "game" to the attention of the actors and in doing so making cooperation the most efficient strategy of both parties. That is the reason why this regime was created and why it was useful.

Naturally, a discussion emerged whether the Roadmap was a "dead letter regime". Given the failure, it is an easy question to answer. Still, some steps on both sides have been taken. For example the office of a Palestinian prime minister was created,

thus giving Israel the opportunity to hold high-level talks with the Palestinians after the Sharon administration declared Arafat a “persona non grata”. Besides, a temporary unilateral truce by the Palestinians had been put into place and Israel did demolish some illegal settlement outposts in the context of the Roadmap. In the end, however, actual peace negotiations never took place, nor did the violence end. This might all be due to the noncommittal manner in which the Roadmap was written, since only the smallest common denominator seemed agreeable. Nevertheless, the effects discussed above are still relevant and true, even if only to a smaller extent. The best answer to all pessimism is still the counter-question: What would be the consequences if the regime would not have been put in place? Would it not have been even worse?

Analyzing only the Roadmap is not sufficient to conclude whether regimes play a decisive role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As noted above there are various relevant regimes, formal and informal, both deepening and softening the conflict. It is important to point out that the introduction of formal institutions always brings about the replacement of informal ones. The failure of the road map might be read as a failure to replace certain informal institutions. So the reason why the Roadmap failed is not inherent in the concept of a regime, but rather evidence for a poor design. All the weaknesses are arguments to further develop measures increasing the will to cooperate rather than abolish regimes as such. A properly designed regime can enable and restrict the behaviour of conflicting parties and hence further the cause of peace.

## **FROM DOVE TO HAWK – CHANGES EXPLAINED**

### ***Domestic Structures/Liberalism***

Theories of international relations that take state preferences as exogenously given often struggle to explain changes in foreign policy. By opening the „black box“ state and examining the domestic structures, liberal approaches are useful for understanding policy turns that are usually hard to grasp with third image rational choice models. To illustrate this advantage, our workgroup applied this theory to two questions: Why did the Palestinian leadership, i.e. Arafat, decide to support terrorism after the second Intifada started although he opposed it in the beginning? And why

did the Israelis decide to re-occupy territory during the second Intifada, although they had withdrawn from it years earlier? It is important to note that examining domestic structures is a very complex endeavor. The relevant actors and the configuration of power are constantly shifting, and hence using this approach makes a broad empirical basis necessary. Needless to say that our workgroup did not fulfill this requirement, although some preparatory efforts were taken. However, this naturally limited the depth of the discussion and of this article.

The domestic structures of “Palestine” can easily explain how the shift towards terrorism of the PA in early 2002 came about. Looking at the institutional level, the most obvious aspect is that the Palestinian Authority is *de facto* not democratic. Yassir Arafat reigns with autocratic powers, and there is no credible opposition against his government within these structures. The only opposition, strong enough to challenge Arafat’s power, is located outside of any institutional setting: the Hamas. To understand the importance of Hamas, it is important to notice that it is much more than a terrorist organization. Its military wing is supported by a strong Islamic *social* movement, with strong roots in society. Especially in Gaza, Hamas is highly respected for providing social services for the poor and disadvantaged. As a consequence of this involvement, Hamas is in touch with the needs and interests of the people. The Palestinian leadership in Ramallah in contrast is quite detached from the masses. Arafat and most of the men surrounding him, spend the better part of their lives in exile, and did not return to the occupied territories until the peace process started in the early nineties. This absence, especially during the first Intifada, combined with a highly privileged living standard led to a detachment from the Palestinian public.

Now, at the onset of the second (al-aqsa-) Intifada all these factors became relevant. The masses started the uprising, instantaneously supported by Hamas and other militant groups. The Palestinian leadership, instead of taking a clear position, was waiting while the violence started to escalate and Hamas gained mass support for its suicide attacks on Israel. Under these circumstances, the PA was unable to judge how strong Hamas might become and if they might threaten its power, because there was no institutional setting, such as a functioning parliament, in which these differences might have been articulated. So, basically out of fear of losing power,

the Palestinian leadership decided to go along with the masses and support terror.

This policy can still be called rational if the level of political actors is our reference. Rational choice-theorists would call every decision of every actor rational, since it served their personal purpose and therefore was goal-oriented. On a collective level, this often leads to an irrational outcome, which might have been the case here.

Israel, a democratic state, made a similar policy shift, which, however, was brought about by elections. During the election campaign in late 2001 and early 2002, the second Intifada had already started. Ariel Sharon, candidate of the rightist Likud party, himself stimulated the uprising by visiting the “harm al-sharif”. This was perceived as a strong provocation for Palestinians, as they consider this holy site part of Palestine. Under the impression of rising violence and the failure of the peace process, the Israeli public shifted to the right and called for a tougher stand towards the Palestinians. Ariel Sharon won the elections and instantaneously translated this shift in public opinion into a much tougher policy towards the Palestinians, starting with “targeted killings” and culminating in “operation defensive shield” in spring 2002, meaning the forceful re-occupation of territory handed over to the PA under the Oslo-accords.

Policy changes in Israel can be much easier analyzed by looking at the institutional settings (i.e. majorities in parliament). Depending on which party gains more votes, policy shifts become possible; and: those shifts in foreign policy can best or even only be explained by looking inside the state. Explaining a policy shift within *one* government proves to be more difficult and would ask for a deeper analysis of Israel’s decision making process than just the look at parliamentary majorities. In our case however, this was not necessary.

The application of this theory to the conflict produced useful insights. Even though a lack of knowledge limited the discussion, many members of our workgroup mentioned gaining a deeper understanding of the changes in the conflict. An interesting point is that under this approach the push of the international community for a democratization of the PA makes perfect sense. Liberal approaches explain the empirical phenomenon that democracies never fight each other. Although such thoughts would not be more than speculation, it seems at least questionable that the

Palestinian people would have staged such an uprising when they felt fairly represented in their political system.

## **BARAK AND ARAFAT PLAYING (TWO-LEVEL-)GAMES**

### ***Camp-David-Negotiations Dec.2000<sup>9</sup>***

In December 2000, during the final days of his presidency, U.S. president Bill Clinton pushed for an end of violence between Palestinians and Israel by getting their respective leaders to negotiate a final peace agreement. These long and intense talks became well known as the Camp David peace negotiations. As Putnam's two-level-game is a tool designed to model international negotiations, we tried to figure out if it would be useful in explaining the failure of these talks between Ehud Barak (prime minister of Israel) and Yassir Arafat (President of the Palestinian Authority). Primarily, we will take a look at the negotiations on the international level, in Putnam's terminology "level I negotiations". Since no ratification process took place (there was nothing to ratify), the domestic or second level will only be regarded indirectly through the win-sets, which are determined by domestic factors. As already mentioned in our introduction to the conflict, we regard Palestine as a state, given that Arafat was Barak's counterpart in the negotiations and had a separate level II. Representing the order of our discussion in the workgroup, a separate presentation of the Israeli and Palestinian win-sets will stand at the beginning. These presentations will be split in two sections, one describing the positions on the issues and another on the domestic factors influencing the size of the win-sets. Following this, a brief paragraph will discuss the outcome of the negotiations. The concluding paragraph will look into the usefulness of Putnam's model to explain the failure of "Camp David".

The major issues determining Arafat's win-set were the question of land and Israeli settlements, the status of Jerusalem and the question of the refugees. A crucial aspect for Arafat was the status of '67 was regarded as the starting point for the

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<sup>9</sup> Our main source was a very interesting article written by co-negotiators of the Camp David negotiations in December 2000: Agha, Hussein / Malley, Robert: Camp David: The Tragedy of Errors, in: New York Book Reviews, Vol. 48 No. 13 (August 9, 2001), <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/14380> (accessed on February 15, 2005).



negotiations and not the actual status quo. Therefore his win-set included a very high percentage of land to be returned, coming close to 100% of occupied territory (better: to be given *back* and not simply *given* as part of an Israeli offer). This can be illustrated by the fact that Palestinians see all of Israeli territory as originally Palestinian homeland; therefore the acceptance of an Israeli state is for them already a concession of land. Jerusalem as capital of a Palestinian state was a key point in Arafat's win-set. With respect to Arafat's claim on the refugee's right of return to Israel, there seemed to be greater leeway. Given these positions, it seems evident that Arafat's win-set was rather small.

Three additional aspects of the anticipated domestic "ratification-process" reduced the win-set further in size. First, past experiences in negotiations raised suspicion towards any Israeli proposal. Given the perceived history of Israeli defections from past promises, Arafat's greatest concern was not to give the impression to domestic veto-players of being deceived by Israel once again. Second, Arafat's autocratic position left the militant islamists as veto-players being the only obstacles in the ratification process. The extremists are articulating their opposition not in terms of votes, but rather through their influence on public opinion taking people to the streets and perpetrating violent attacks on both sides of the green line. Hence an unfavorable outcome could have sparked a Palestinian civil war. Finally, the costs of no-agreement for the Palestinian President were negligible, as his political position in the given situation was not at all threatened in case of a failure; a poor agreement would have been much more risky. As already mentioned, the basis for the negotiations for Arafat was the status of 1967 rather than the status quo. This further lowered his perceived costs of no-agreement, as he also expected the position of Palestine to improve in the long run. International pressure on Israel to give up occupation would rise, as would economic pressure in Israel and the demographic conditions of Arabic population. It could also be assumed that Arafat had the history of Lebanon in mind, where Hezbollah achieved Israeli withdrawal over time by use of force only, not making any concessions. All these facts pushed the costs of no-agreement for Arafat to zero and he therefore neglected the need to enlarge his win-set.

Barak's primary objective was to reach a final agreement, settling all issues between the two sides, rather than a step-by-step approach. His attitude was marked by distrust towards the Palestinian leadership. The core issue for the Israeli side was

security. Settlements in the West Bank and Gaza were seen as Israeli territory, but following the “land for peace”-doctrine, Barak was willing to give up most of this land in order to accomplish a peace-settlement. The notion of Jerusalem as part of a Palestinian state or even as its capital was rather unthinkable for Barak. A comparably strong position was taken on the issue of the refugee’s right of return to Israel, as a probable influx of Palestinian refugees into the Israeli heartland was feared to end the Jewish character of Israel. What clearly enlarged the win-set of Barak was the great demand of the Israeli public for a final agreement providing security and stability, i.e. peace.

Clearly distinctive in determining Barak’s win-set was the institutionalized and thus predictable ratification process on the Israeli side through the Knesset. Given party majorities in the parliament and favorable national polls made it easier for the prime minister to calculate his win-sets. The missing predictability of Palestinian ratification process made it more difficult for Barak to assess his counter-part’s win-set. The Prime Minister also couldn’t be sure whether an agreed contract would be followed also by radical Palestinian opposition groups, since they are not integrated into the structures of political power in the Palestine Authority but articulating their protest “on the streets”.

It seems impossible, at least with the information at hand, to exactly determine the win-sets of both sides. Even though an agreement on the issues seemed to be possible, the win-sets finally didn’t overlap. This was primarily due to the Palestinian domestic constellations analyzed above, which put Arafat in a position where he didn’t feel able to make any concessions. Additionally, the lack of knowledge about each other’s win-sets seemed to be fatal and consequently led to serious mistrust. Arafat was most concerned not to reach an agreement, but to be seen as a tough negotiator defending Palestinian interests and not to be fooled by the Israelis. The perceived low costs of no-agreement by Arafat also contributed to the failure of Camp David. The existence of silent allies on the respective other side should have made the peace talks easier, but there were also allies opposing peace on both sides.

Putnam’s two-level-games could be well applied to our case and certainly proved useful to understand the negotiations. As it is often the case with models, the problems in application lie in the details, here especially in determining the exact composition of the win-sets. The Two-Level-Games are therefore to be seen as an

instrument to grasp the dynamics of such international negotiations, their links to the domestic area and the motivation of the chief negotiators (which we didn't really inspect here). They are a very good tool to connect international and domestic level and to study their links and dynamics, rather than to examine both levels separately.

## **COGNITIVE APPROACHES IN THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT**

### ***Decision Maker: Brain***

Cognitive Approach focuses on individual decision makers as processors and managers of information. Consequently, states are neither unitary actors nor actors at all. Decisions are taken at the individual level and hence the individual's belief system must be examined to understand how. We will therefore take a closer look at the two most important decision makers of the conflict, Yassir Arafat and Ariel Sharon, and their belief systems. Afterwards, we will try to illustrate the impact of these belief systems on particular decisions. Before evaluating the benefits of a cognitive approach for the analysis of the Middle East conflict, we will examine the prospects for initiating a learning process.

Arafat has a military or rather: guerrilla background. He has lived most of his life underground or in forced exile before returning to Palestine and becoming the political leader of his people. He repeatedly experienced the use of violence as helpful in achieving political goals. His self-image of a fighter is expressed by the battle-dress he was constantly wearing, even when meeting other statesmen. Arafat is said to have some kind of paranoia of losing his power by betrayers inside his own ranks, so he is very careful not to enrage any potential opposition forces. This narrows his scope in negotiations and makes him look almost exclusively at domestic constellations by ignoring Israel's restrictions. Besides these personal aspects, cultural norms and values also play a vital role as impersonal social powers. In Arab societies, defeat in general is seen as maybe the biggest disgrace or humiliation. Strength and power are therefore central values, so that Arafat has to present himself as a strong defender of Palestine rather than as somebody who is able to agree to compromises. The historical background is especially important in explaining Arafat's, and Palestinians in general, very strong self-perception as victims of Israel,

but also as victims of Arab neighbours and as victims of the super powers, who all neglected their support for the Palestinian struggle for independence. Given the many incidents of suppression by Israel and Israeli defection from treaties, Israel is not seen as a partner in negotiations, but rather as an enemy against whom one has to defend one's own interests.

Although coming from a very different cultural background, Sharon's belief system shows some similar features. His career started at the military, where he spent almost his entire life. The ex-General fought in all of Israel's wars since 1948 and it therefore seems obvious that he has no fundamental objections towards the use of military force to achieve political goals. He rather fears that weakness might lead to the destruction of Israel. For him, the Arab slogan, "Throw the Jews into the sea" is still representing a credible menace. In the eyes of Sharon, this existentialistic threat can only be met by military force, since Israel and the Jews never got any support from outside forces (Holocaust-experience). Sharon also enjoys the image of being a political underdog in the political scene in Israel. He always has to fight opposition from the leftist political establishment. Standing against opposition seems to make him even stronger and more determined to have it his way. This makes him, just like Arafat, resistant to compromises. Those features of Sharon's belief system already indicate some difficulties that might arise when negotiating the Palestinian future.

Belief systems are filters and thus do not *determine* any actions. Decisions are still taken i.e. with regard to military/political restrictions and to the domestic public, but may be *altered* by personal aspects of the decision maker. Therefore it seems hard or even impossible to identify any specific decisions which can only be explained by cognitive aspects, but still: Other outcomes are possible, if the same circumstances are perceived through a different belief system. The most obvious influence in our case would be the military experience of both Arafat and Sharon, who therefore seem to "filter out" political options and swing to military solutions. In the face of the rising second Intifada, both decision makers chose violent paths – Arafat by supporting terror and Sharon by forcefully reoccupying the territories already administered by the PA. Arafat left the path paved by the Oslo peace process and returned to violence by supporting the second Intifada in early 2001, while Sharon answered with the "Operation Defensive Shield" rather than diplomatic solutions. Both leaders distrust

political solutions, which can be explained by their biographical experience and not necessarily by assuming “rational”, goal oriented behaviour. Another example for the influence of cognitive aspects on the conflict is the refusal of Sharon to meet or talk to Arafat. Sharon has seen him as a terrorist and his personal enemy ever since their military encounter in Beirut, Lebanon in 1982. The cognitive approach stresses the importance of inter-subjectivity for the constitution of reality. Here, this would mean, that since they both consider each other as leaders prone to use violence, in reality violence is being used and regarded as the only option.

An important question for cognitive approaches is the possibility of learning. Can learning be initiated, and if so, how? With regard to Sharon and Arafat, this must be seen as rather difficult. Their advanced age, along with a lot of political experience, is certainly the most telling indicator hinting towards a lack of learning capacity and the difficulty to change their perceptions and beliefs. Both of them appear to be examples of cognitive consistency, since they seem to ignore any information that does not fit into their belief system or make this information fit in by misinterpreting it. A good example is the failure of the Middle East Quartet in changing their policies. This can be interpreted as a failure in changing Arafat’s and Sharon’s perceptions of reality which is in fact filtered by their belief systems. Occasions that, according to theorists, induce learning, such as important personal, or societal events, did not occur while Sharon and Arafat were in power.

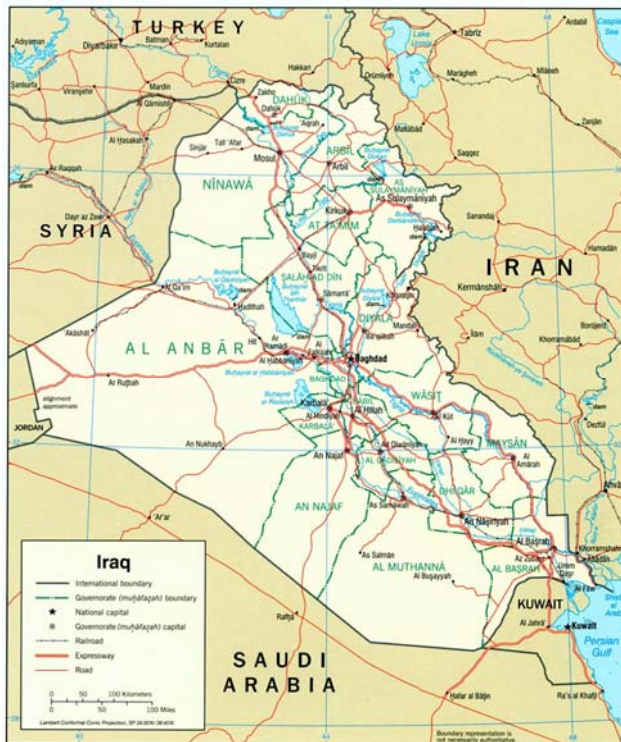
The cognitive approach seems to give some helpful hints towards understanding the situation as of summer 2004, especially the lack of movement. But it is impossible to conclude that the choices made can only be explained by the decision makers’ belief systems when it comes to specific decisions. There are always political/military “realities” that restrain behaviour and there is always a public opinion that influences the decision making process. As mentioned above, belief systems function as a filter rather than a source for decisions taken. From this perspective, the emphasis on the individual leader seems to be productive. It opens up the possibility of changing the politics of a state (be it by changing the leader) and makes it possible to include personal features of decision makers. It would seem absurd to deny that personal experience and cognitive perception of human beings (which politicians are, too) would not have any effect on their decisions taken. A more Gandhi-like political

leader in the Middle East would definitely have contributed to a different outcome in the region, even if the military, political and historical circumstances would have been the same.

# IRAQ CONFLICT

BY KATHARINA HOFFMANN

## CONFLICT SETTING: IRAQ – AN INTRODUCTION



Source: Central Intelligence Agency,  
[http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle\\_east\\_and\\_asia/iraq\\_pol\\_2004.jpg](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/iraq_pol_2004.jpg)

When elaborating core elements of a long-lasting conflict, one is confronted not only with the most influential agents, but also with several structural aspects, determining the conflict situation. Depending on the respective theoretical approach, geographical features, deposits of natural resources, historical developments (or rather their instrumentalization in the conflict), the ethnic, religious and social structure of society, may serve as explanatory factors.

In order not to overstress our analysis, on the most recent crisis of 2002/2003, which came to a head with the claim of US President George W. Bush to enforce the destruction of weapons of mass destruction, upon which the UN Security Council Resolution 687 (cease fire resolution 1991) had agreed, and Iraq's rejection to cooperate with the inspectors of UNMOVIC<sup>10</sup> and IAEA<sup>11</sup>, which according to the UN Security Council Resolution 687 and 1441 (2002) had the mandate to monitor the disarmament. This confrontation led to the third Gulf War. The US-led operation "Iraq Freedom" started with air raids on Baghdad on 20 March 2003 and ended on 9 April after coalition tanks rolled into Baghdad.

Since the aim of our working group primarily lies in testing the explanatory power of different theories of International Relations and not in analyzing causes and solution strategies of the conflict, this introduction will present a relatively reductionist outline of the main agents involved in the conflict. Good theories, too, are in principle parsimonious and simplifying.

<sup>10</sup> UNMOVIC: UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission

<sup>11</sup> IAEA: International Atom Energy Agency

We will hence refer to Kenneth Waltz' three "levels of analysis"<sup>12</sup> providing fundamental tools of analysis in International Relations. The first level stresses the role of individuals as agents, whilst the second image is focusing on the societal and national context. The third image is related to the global structure of the international system, formed by coactions of the units. Therefore the relation between states and relevant transnational and international actors have to be taken into account.

The Iraq Crisis is not an internal conflict, so it appears only natural to first concentrate on the third level. One of the most important international actors are the United Nations and the IAEA. In 1991 the Second Gulf War following Iraq's invasion in Kuwait ended with the UN Ceasefire Resolution 687, imposing the destruction of biological, nuclear and chemical weapons under control of a UN Special Commission (UNSCOM). Due to its position to provide an international legitimacy for military actions against Iraq, the United Nations had functioned more or less as a mediator at least until March 2003. The UNMOVIC and IAEA had been in charge of verification for Iraq's deposits of BNC weapons and provided substantial information influencing the decision making process of the UN members. Regarding the relations between states most important seem to be the relation between Iraq and the USA as well as Iraq's attitude towards the UN. Iraq's cooperation with UNSCOM had been characterized by diverse attempts to impede the inspector's work. The inspections had been almost totally blocked from 1997 to November 2002, being resumed only in reaction to massive international pressure. The tension between the USA and Iraq can be assessed as critical, since the USA still perceived the Iraq as a threat to international security. Applying the classification of the world system approach the Iraq belongs to the periphery being isolated from international economic and political cooperation due to the sanctions stipulated in 1990 (UNSR 661), while the USA constitutes one core center of the world system.

A look on the second image including national and sub-national actors may be illuminative concerning the emergence of 2002/2003 crisis.

The United States Government, supported by 30 states which formed the "coalition of the willing", appears to be (aggressor in) the initiator of the third Gulf War, arguing that Iraq's possible use of weapons of mass destruction necessitates "pre-emptive action". In September 2002 U.S. President George W. Bush raised the issue of Iraq's disarmament in front of the UN General Assembly, declaring that should the UN



Security Council not enforce the process, the United States would consider unilateral strategies of disarmament. There are a variety of interests of the U.S. Government in the conflict including the “war on terrorism” proclaimed in consequence of 9-11, internal legitimacy, as well as geo-strategic and economic aspects concerning e.g. the deposits of oil in the region. Turning to the U.S.-American sub-national level, public support of the Government’s Iraq policy had been generally high. Focusing mainly on the question of unilateral action versus multilateral action, two camps within the Bush administration could be distinguished: On the one hand, the neo-conservatives (represented by Vice President Richard Cheney as well as Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld) perceived Iraq as an immediate threat for vital national interests and believed that an involvement of the United Nations would only delay necessary measures. On the other hand, there was the assumption (by Secretary of State Collin Powell et. al.), that unilateral action would damage U.S. long term interests.

The debate on the strategy to deal with Iraq divided not only the UN Security Council but Europe as well. Whilst the leaders of Great Britain, Denmark, Italy, Portugal and Spain together with most of the then EU candidates supported of the U.S. policy towards Iraq, Germany and France et.al opposed unilateral military action against it.

The United Kingdom, due to the important role it played in the history of modern Iraq, can be described as the traditional and most important partner in the US-led “coalition of the willing” concerning US-Iraq-policy. In spite of backing the US position in the course of Gulf War III in official statements very early, the decision to participate in military action even without an UN Resolution had been made only after the USA had already given Hussayn the ultimatum.

The neighboring countries, even though most affected by direct consequences of a war, could exert only limited influence on the question of military action against Iraq. Apart from Jordan, which sought not to jeopardize its close relations to Washington, the regional actors rejected the U.S. policy towards Iraq with differing intensity. Different motivations, as et al. the fear of Iraq’s disintegration leading to regional instability or an interest in keeping U.S. influence in the region at bay are decisive. In view on Iraq the main actor on this level appeared to be the Baathist regime. The Baathist regime in Iraq could be described as a dictatorship with strong features of a patronage system, relying on tribal structures, domestic repression and economic inducement. Apart from the Baathist Party and the bureaucracy, the armed forces

and security services, being split in several competing organizations, are said to have been a main source of regime stability in Iraq. Broadening the range of options for Hussayn by supporting the regime they play a vital role in the conflict. The organized opposition in exile, though, plays an important role. The almost 40 parties and religious movements are taking action from their London base and gain vital political support from Washington. In scope of the "Future of Iraq Project", which has been initiated by the U.S. Government, the Iraq National Congress and the Supreme Council of Islamic Revolution in Iraq, elaborated, a strategy for transition to democracy. Furthermore the Iraq interim Government had been formed out of members of these opposition parties.

Finally the individual level has to be scrutinized. The two main characters immediately coming to mind are Saddam Hussayn and George W. Bush. The excessive power of Saddam Hussayn arose from the system of power he had established, since it was based on personal ties and loyalty to his person. Regarding George W. Bush there might be mentioned, that his politics were determined by his conservative attitude and strong religious back ground.

As mentioned before, this introduction is supposed to give only a short overview of the conflict setting, in order to provide a first fundament for the debates in the working groups. Below you will find some suggestions for literature and interesting web sites for a more in-depth analysis of different aspects concerning the situation in Iraq.

### ***Further Readings:***

**Fürtig**, Henner: Kleine Geschichte des Irak. Beck, München 2003.

**Krause**, Joachim: Die Krise um den Irak und die internationale Ordnung, in: Kieler Analysen zur Sicherheitspolitik No.4, Jan. 2003, p. 1-25.

**Lawrence**, Christopher: Iraq, 9/11, and the War. Understanding Mass Belief in the Perceived Threat of Saddam Hussein and Support for War. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago Illinois 2004, p.1-15.

**Münkler**, Herfried: Der neue Golfkrieg. Hamburg: Rowohlt 2003.

**Press-Barnathan**, Galia: The War against Iraq and International Order: From Bull to Bush, in: International Studies Review, Vol. 6. 2004, p. 195-212.

**Http:// [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov)** US Department of State: Official statements

**Http://[www.rferl.org](http://www.rferl.org)** Radio Free Europe – Radio Liberty

**Http:// [www.icg.org](http://www.icg.org)** International Crisis Group

## DO IDEAS MATTER?

### *A Constructivist Approach To The Iraq Crisis*

What does the 2002/2003 Iraq crisis look like from a constructivist point of view? After having a short look on texts and essays introducing constructivism in IR, the question upcoming first is: Does “the” one constructivist point of view exist and does it provide a clear frame of laws and hypotheses, which we can apply to our case? Constructivism in International Relations rather implies a wide range of approaches, which propose constructivism as a meta-theory, a social theory or theoretical and empirical perspective, rather than a clearly shaped homogenous concept. Nevertheless, there are some common assumptions upon which the different branches are based.

First, the ontological perspective assumes that reality is socially constructed and cannot per se be experienced. It can be assessed, or “constructed” but only against the background of discourses in which the agents and observer are integrated. As a result the epistemological assumption considers knowledge as a construct as well. This leads to the question how these social constructs are produced and which discourses are decisive for certain settings.

Since this provides more of a breeding ground for a (even philosophical) debate which easily gets out of hand, and therefore is not suitable for a short discussion on crisis in Iraq, we decided to refer to Alexander Wendt’s Social Theory of International Politics.

Wendt concentrates on the problem how preferences and interests of actors can change. According to his theory one core element of analysis is the identity of the agents. Identity as well as interests, deriving from identity, are based on shared ideas and are socially constructed in course of interaction between different actors. Though he does not completely evade opening the black-box “state”, Alexander Wendt mainly looks at the third level, because he aims at explaining structural changes in the international system. He as well proceeds from the assumption, that the international system is principally anarchic, but points out that it is structured by identities, depending on social and individual cognition. The social set which can be found in the international system ranges from adversary, rival to friend.

Against this background, the following questions structured our discussion:

Which patterns of identity and interests had been decisive in the Iraq crisis? Which ideas and perceptions had been significant for the change of international cooperation in course of Iraq crisis and before? Does a re-definition of identity can be observed?

In order to get an idea of the structure and the perception of roles determining the international system in the period of the conflict, we tried to find out patterns of identity of Iraq and USA, while first focusing on the mutual perception. In the second step we concentrated on the countries' self-perception. The mutual image of both USA and Iraq had been more or less the same, only the argumentation differed. They considered each other as enemies. That implies a high willingness to use violence against each other. As officially argued by the USA, Iraq presented a threat toward international security and therefore a threat to the U.S. – American security. From the Iraq point of view, the United States did not only undermine the Baath' regime through various action, but threatened it directly by claiming a regime change in Iraq. Due to the fact that a digression from the structure of the international system would be too far reaching, it should only be mentioned, that the U.S. assessment of Iraq's role had been supported widely. In contrast, the role attributed to the U.S.A. had been mainly the one of a "friend". Since this set of perceptions can, at least after the second gulf war, be considered as a relatively stable, we argued that the mutual attitude has only limited importance for the emergence of the current crisis.

Discussing elements of Iraq's self-perception, we figured that the claim to become or to be a regional power had been decisive for Iraq's foreign politics, but at present at least no action in this direction can be observed. In view of Saddam Hussein's non-cooperative position, one can assume that the stability of his regime was assured (beyond doubt) in his own perception. To sum up it can be said that the self-perception of Iraq had been relatively stable as well.

Investigating the U.S. foreign policy, some changes being decisive for the crisis, can be determined. Most obviously is the decreasing importance of international cooperation in U.S. foreign politics, since the military action against Iraq without U.N. approval.

Changes in means, changes in interests, changes in identity?

A main feature of U.S.-American self-perception is the image of a world power by means as well as by mission. Moreover, self-description as democratic society based

on Christian values, constitutes a significant characteristic of U.S.-American identity, which in recent times serves as criteria for negative identification against others.

The concept of democratic peace as well as the assumption that democracy and stability are exportable runs through their foreign policy strategies. An important discourse broaches the issue on strength and, coming along with it, security. The image of the invulnerable society has been deeply challenged by the Al-Qauida attack on the World Trade Center in 2001. 9-11 appears to be a turning point, because it triggered a change in the discourses concerning U.S.-American identity. Efforts to deepen the surveillance of potentially dangerous tendencies at the level of society and to establish an alert system for terror attacks give evidence for a profound perception of a security deficit.

As mentioned above, the division between societies based on Islamic values and Christian societies became a frequently used rhetoric. In scope of these recent processes the re-definition of Iraq as an imminent threat and the new consideration of means and options can be explained as an attempt to regain the feeling of security in the U.S.-American society. Self-confidence and security can be seen both as socially constructed phenomena. Because of their reflexive character the revaluation of the perception can result in consequent and successful action against a clearly defined opponent. Since Al-Qauida has not the qualities of an equal partner, being neither state nor international organization based on international law, which in consequence puts constraints to direct sanctions, the USA tried to shift the conflict to the state's level, while taking action against states potentially protecting terrorist groups. The fact, that the situation in Iraq had been a repeated topic since the war in 1991, can be seen as an supportive element for the decision to concentrate on Iraq.

As already mentioned, a revaluation of cooperation can be observed in the U.S. Foreign Policy during the crisis. This rises the question whether the change can be explained as well by going back to the discourse of security? According to Wendt, cooperation becomes likely if interests and actions of states are based on shared ideas. In course of the military action against Iraq, the United States did not principally deny cooperation, but the strategies mapped out by the U.N. did not match their U.S.-American objectives. Arguing that the first priority of the U.S. strategy has been to regain the feeling of security, it stands to reason that the interests differed from those of the most international actors. A continuation of U.N. inspections and sanctions leads, if at all, only to long term success. It could have been regarded

rather as weakness, than as an expression of the power and capacity to act, as it had been considered to be necessary for reestablishing the tarnished image of the countries security.

The decision to engage in military action with disregard to the U.N. position had been supported by other ongoing processes and discourses, like the softening of the “sovereignty” concept as institution in the international system. An increasingly intensive debate on humanitarian intervention in the early 1990ies, which has been closely linked to the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, led to a widespread acceptance, that in case of doubt humanitarian intervention overrides the violation of sovereignty. This example shows that transaction cost can be reduced by such changing perceptions.

Albeit our analysis had been without doubt simplifying, not only by taking exclusively U.S.A. and Iraq in consideration and arguing mainly at the third level, the constructivist approach proved to be helpful for explaining and understanding key processes of the Iraq crisis in 2002/03.

## **DECISION OVER A “SECOND RESOLUTION” - A PRISONER’S DILEMMA?**

### ***Rational Choice Approache***

After the introduction to Rational Choice as a meta-theory our working group had been asked to apply the prisoner’s dilemma – one of the most popular games of game theory – to a situation taken out of the Iraq crisis and to discuss afterwards the explanatory power of this approach.

In spite of the parsimony of this theoretical approach, the question, which situation would fit in the game’s setting had not been easy to answer. Since the model promises explanatory power for negotiations, we decided to apply the PD-model to the question, whether to pass a “second resolution” in the security council, which would authorize the United States and the so-called “Coalition of the willing” to implement Iraq’s disarmament via military campaign. Following a nearly 3 month debate, Great Britain, Spain and the United States in February 2003 came forward with a draft resolution, which declared Iraq’s breach of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1441 and referred to Chapter VII of the UN Charter, considering

action in the case of threat to the international peace and security. France, Russia and China, three of the five veto-holding members of the Security Council, voted against military action, preferring an extension of the restarted UN weapons inspections. Hence the resolution failed, which did not prevent a military campaign against Iraq.

Just as the setting of the prisoner's dilemma is based on a short story, we first tried to develop the pursuant "story" for our setting.

Therefore we had to outline the interests of the "prisoners," who in this case are the United States, Great Britain and Spain (***prisoner 1***) on the one hand and Germany, France and China (***prisoner 2***) on the other hand. The overall common interest seems to be international security and peace and as a result the disarmament of Iraq. The best practice option for ***prisoner 1*** would be military action against Iraq legitimized by a UNSCR. For ***prisoner 2*** the best option would be to avoid military action in order to maintain international stability. Cooperation would mean the adoption of a common UN resolution resulting in a common strategy towards Iraq. Defection therefore would be rejection of a common resolution resulting in unilateral action. Four situations are to be considered:

**Situation 1:** The "coalition of the willing" agrees to continue the weapons inspections. In the case that evidence is discovered for Iraq's arsenal of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) they will argue that "pre-emptive" military action is legitimate given the right to self-defense defined in Article 51 of the UN Charter. The second resolution draft passes, providing the mandate for military action, if WMD are really found. According to the "prisoner's dilemma", this scenario should provide high costs for ***prisoner 1*** and low costs for ***prisoner 2***. In our setting the cost for Germany, France and China and for the UN are at least lower, in the case that the draft resolution passes – given the evidence of a material breach of UNSCR 1441 on the part of Iraq. Although military action is generally undesirably, collective military intervention within the framework of the UN is perceived as not to jeopardize the stability of the international order. Furthermore the operation draws legitimacy from the fact that Saddam Hussein denies compliance with international demands and presents a threat to international security.

From the US's point of view, the costs of collective action are high, since this would come along with further attempts to resolve the crisis with political means and the continuation of the UN inspector's work, which already proved to be unable to realize

their mission. This loss of time causes a highly risky situation concerning international peace and would not match the US interests.

**Situation 2:** Arguing that Iraq poses no imminent threat, the UN Security Council rejects a second resolution. Hereupon the “coalition of the willing” decides on military action against Iraq without UN approval. The theoretical game setting entails very high costs for “*prisoner 2*” but complete success for “*prisoner 1*”. Within the scope of our story, this would mean more or less success for the United States and its allies, because they assume to disarm Iraq with their preferred means. The costs for Germany, France and China are very high, because they are not able to prevent unilateral military action and aggression against another state and thus have failed to solve an international crisis within the framework provided by the UN.

**Situation 3:** According to the PD model the third constellation should entail high cost for each of the prisoners. In our setting the cost for both prisoners would be relatively high if the resolution passes and both sides would realize a military operation against Iraq on the basis of only vague evidence concerning Iraq’s WMD. Even if the operation leads to complete disarmament of the regime, the lack of fundamental evidence which is given concerning the topic of WMD in the country, would question whether Security Council Resolutions are able to ensure legality in the international law of military action any more. Referring to this argument, some of the UN members would not support military action, even if it would be authorized by a UNSCR. This would suggest that the United States would face complications in diplomatic relations with opponent states like Germany or France. Nevertheless, compared with unilateral action an UN approval would lower US-American costs. Last but not least there are the real costs of war and the country’s reconstruction in the aftermath of war.

**Situation 4:**

The less cost-intensive setting for both would be the solution of the crisis without military action. Taking into account the interests of the USA and Iraq, it appears difficult to say what such a solution should look like, but one proposal would be proven disarmament of the regime in Iraq reached by peaceful means, such as the work of UN inspectors and political negotiations. Since this setting does not depend on the decision of the two prisoners only, but on the degree of cooperation accepted by Iraq, it does not fit the PD model very well.

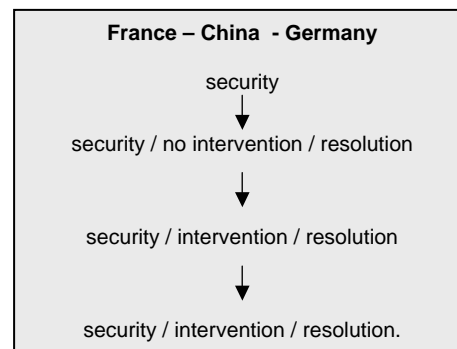
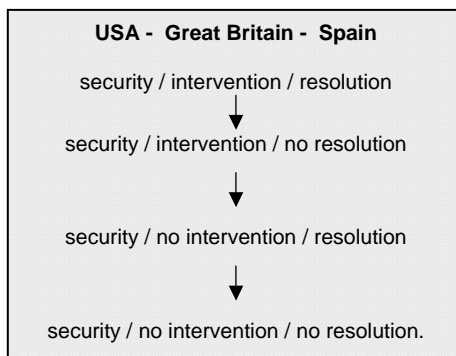


## MATRIX OF THE CLASSIC PD MODEL AND THE MATRIX OF OUR SETTING

| Prisoner 2 | Prisoner 1                    |                            |                               |
|------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
|            |                               | Not to confess (cooperate) | To confess (not to cooperate) |
|            | Not to confess (cooperate)    | 5                          | 10                            |
|            | To confess (not to cooperate) | 5                          | -10                           |
|            |                               | -10                        | -5                            |
|            |                               | 10                         | -5                            |

| China, France, Germany (Prisoner 2) | USA, Great Britain, Spain (Prisoner 1)                        |   |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|
|                                     |   | Resolution and common strategy towards Iraq (cooperation) | No Resolution and no common strategy towards Iraq (defection) |
|                                     | Resolution and common strategy towards Iraq (cooperation)     | 2   | 6   |
|                                     | No Resolution and no common strategy towards Iraq (defection) | 10  | (unilateral military action)<br>-10                           |
|                                     |   | -2  | -5  |
|                                     |   | 10  | (unilateral military action)<br>-5                            |

### SET OF PREFERENCES



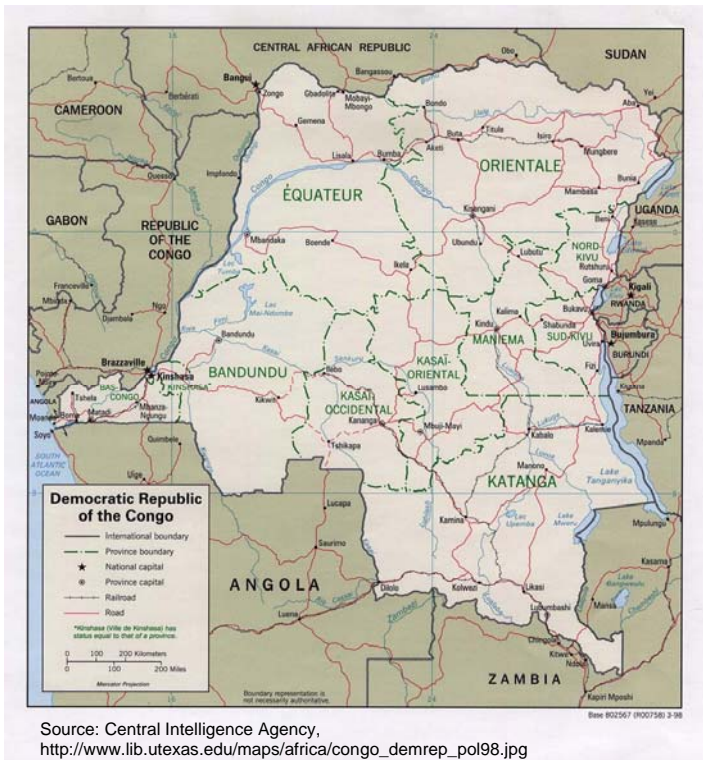
After all, does the setting developed for the second resolution correspond to the PD model and thus can the outcome be explained by it? Having a closer look at the four constellations, first of all, the argumentation obviously is not stringent. When comparing the original PD matrix and the matrix developed within the working group, which gives an overview over the possible settings and the respective costs, it is obvious that the cost for the prisoners in at least two settings differ from the model. The differences are caused by several preconditions which differ in the chosen example. First of all the situation focusing the UN Security Council Resolution is, of course, more complex, than the situation assumed in the model. Rational Choice theory requires a stable and straight set of preferences which lead to action. Our example appears to be too complex to reduce the actor's preferences to a hierarchical set of four or five preferences. While analyzing the interests of the UN we have to consider the special interests of the veto-holding members. Obviously, they cannot easily be reduced to a consistent interest; even the interests and preferences

of the USA cannot clearly be reduced to one strategy. They depend on several variables such as support within society, economic development, and the international position of the respective (sub-) actors, to mention only the most evident factors. The set of preferences of both prisoners in our model are varying (see table 2). One of the highest preferences of the “coalition of the willing” seems to be intervention in order to establish security. France, Germany, and China in contrast highly prefer the avoidance of intervention. Furthermore, the external setting cannot be considered as clearly determined in the case of the “second resolution” as opposed to the model, because there is no district attorney or officer determining the punishment. According to the PD model the prisoners both would not cooperate and therefore both have to face relatively high costs. The final decision of the UN Security Council regarding military action against the Baghdad regime had been not to pass the resolution draft. The “coalition of the willing” then started the operation “Iraq Freedom” without UN-authorization. So the agents did not choose the expected outcome, but the United Nations (France, Germany and China) had to assume a very high cost, while the cost for the United States were said to be relatively low in terms of pursuing their interests (see setting 2). Evidently the explanatory power of the prisoner’s dilemma had failed. The question remains, what are the reasons for this failure? Comparing the basic assumption of the prisoner’s dilemma with their application to our example, the agents’ perception of the external setting can be identified as remarkably different. While the strategies of both prisoners are based on the same information about the external environment and options, which had been explicitly pointed out by the district attorney, the agents’ perception of the external setting in the Iraq crisis differed widely. France, Germany and China, relying upon the results of the UN inspections, did not see the necessity for urgent action; whereas the United States perceived the Iraq Regime as an imminent threat for the national interests as well as international security. Given the deviating perceptions, the set of preferences differed to a degree that made cooperation unlikely. During the final discussion, the explanatory power of the prisoner’s dilemma for our example had been doubted. The working group argued that many of the core assumptions the setting relied upon had to be further scrutinized. One of the questions which arose is whether the disarmament of the Iraq had been the U.S. Government’s prior aim, or whether it primarily functioned as an intermediate stage for another strategy. In this case the set of preferences would be respectively altered.

# THE CONFLICT IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

BY CHRISTINE SCHUSTER:

## “THE CONFLICT OF THE GREAT LAKES”<sup>13</sup>



This text is supposed to give an introduction into the Conflict in and around the Democratic Republic of Congo. After first of all indicating the extent of the conflict with some figures that make clear why it's called war, a very short historical introduction is given, comprising the colonial time up to today. In this historical overview the most important actors and the essential sources of conflict are named, as are the most effective (if at all) peace steps. The introduction ends

with an exclusive image of the actual status and the future problems.

The Conflict in the DRC (formerly known as Zaire) has been called Africa's First World War There have been a number of complex reasons for the designation of the conflict, including competition for basic resources such as water, access and control over rich minerals and other natural resources which can be found in this central-African country that is the size of half of Europe. This led to various political disputes, especially in the two richest provinces, North- and Southkivu.

Since the outbreak of fighting in August 1998, at least 3.3 million people, mostly women, children and the elderly, are estimated to have died because of the conflict,

<sup>13</sup> „The Conflict of the Great Lakes“ is a literal denomination for the war in and around the today Democratic Republic of Congo, former Belgish-Congo, Republic of Congo and Zaire. It refers to the rich areas around Lakes Tanganyka, Albert and the flow-ins of Lake Victoria, representing the ending of the great river Congo. This area has always been and still is a source of conflict about exploitation rights and political control.

most from disease and starvation. In addition to that, more than 2.25 million people have been driven from their homes, many of them beyond the reach of humanitarian agencies.

### ***Brief History***

As with most conflicts in Africa, the current situation is strongly linked to the legacy of colonialism. The conflict's history starts with the violent 1885 Belgian imposition of colonial rule under King Leopold II, whom himself never visited the region.

After 75 years of colonial rule, the Belgians left very abruptly, relinquishing the political rights to the people of Congo in 1960. However, independence did not mean that economic rights enabled all inhabitants to benefit from the rich resource base. Still, former white colonialists dominated the economic, political and especially military ordering of the country. Furthermore, conflicts between different ethnic groups and regional powers about the new governmental structure arose. A few months after Patrice Lumumba, head of MNC, Congolese national libertarian party, became elected head of state, he was overthrown with US and European support by his former ally, Mobutu Sese Soko. Besides his claims for more independence for the Congolese people and his accusation of the former colonialists, Lumumba was suspected of cooperating with the Soviet Union during the Cold War period.

Mobutu used his U.S.-supplied arsenal to repress his own people and plunder his nation's economy for three decades, until his dictatorship was overthrown by the AFDL (Alliance des Forces Democratiques pour la Liberation du Congo-Zaire) led by Laurent Desire Kabila with the aid of Rwanda, Uganda, Angola, Burundi and Eritrea in May 1997. Kabila, also backed by the US, was accused by Congolese soldiers, Congolese Tutsi Banyamulenge<sup>14</sup>, Rwandan, Ugandan and some Burundian government troops of turning into a dictator of mismanagement, corruption and supporting various paramilitary groups who oppose his former allies. Therefore these groups themselves formed various Rebel Groups, opposing the government on the internal level since August 1998. As the conflict had raged on, rebels controlled about a third of the entire country (the eastern parts).

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<sup>14</sup> Banyamulenge is how the ruandish-speaking inhabitants of South-Kivu call themselves since 1967 to distinguish themselves from hutu-refugees of Ruanda-Urundi, how settled there, too. Literally translated it means "inhabitants of Mulenge."

Until the assassination of Laurent Kabila in January 2001, Angola, Zimbabwe, and Namibia supported the Congolese government, while the rebels were backed by the governments of Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi.

Various African states, primarily South Africa, tried to intervene. In the Organisation for African Unity (OAU, today African Union) the "Conflict of the Great Lakes" has always received special attention. All these efforts lead to the signing of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement in 1999, which is considered to be the base of all peaceful solution proceedings in the conflict. Nevertheless, combats did not stop and peace was fragile. There were various political problems in trying to get a UN peacekeeping force in to help out, while killings continued. The UN deployed a small cease-fire monitoring body called Interim Emergency Multinational Force (IEMF) in 1999 which was upgraded to the UN-Mission MONUC (Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies en République démocratique du Congo) in July 2003 to 'protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence'.

However, Amnesty International, amongst others, has noted that "MONUC has been a hostage to its weak mandate and has lacked the necessary equipment, personnel and international political backing."<sup>15</sup>

On January 16, 2001 Laurent Kabila himself was assassinated and his son Joseph Kabila became the new President of the DRC. He said that he would further encourage the need for cooperation with the United Nations in deployment of troops, strengthen the dialog of national reconciliation and help revive the stalled Lusaka peace agreements.<sup>16</sup>

The so called "*Innercongolese dialogue*", held from February to April 2002 in Sun City, was supposed to comprise five components, two rebel movements (the Uganda-backed MLC as well as the Rwandan-backed Congolese Rally for Democracy), non-armed opposition groups, political parties, civil society organizations and the government. But the power sharing question was mainly negotiated between the government, the rebel groups and one opposition group. The Lusaka agreements (the Ceasefire agreement of 1999 and its reformulation in 2001) were declared dead, as various groups had had disagreements on a variety of issues. But also the Innercongolese-Dialog in Sun City 2002 could not solve all of

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.amnesty.org.uk/action/drc/international.shtml>

them, not to mention the struggles in the implementation of the arrangement. Several groups counteracted the implementation, others did not fulfill what they declared. Parts of the society who felt underrepresented funded new groups or parties, putting the whole process in question.

Nevertheless, the DRC is actually in the status of "Transition", with enormous aims:

First of all, a Reunification, pacification and reconstruction of the country has to take place. Once the armed conflict is stopped or at least limited and the direct war damages are reconstructed, the establishment of territorial integrity and the authority of the state over the whole territory are what is strived for. Of course, the relationship between ceasefire consolidation and controlling processes is debatable, but at least this is how plans are.

After the government and a territorial integration have been established, it is important for future coexistence that a national conciliation takes place. There, crimes of war will be brought to court and history is worked up.

The important role military played during every part of the conflict, especially thinking back to the overthrow of the democratically elected first national government of the Congo, the creation of an integrated and restructured national army seems to be a crucial point for the chances of success of the peace process. Its actual importance can also be observed, looking at the numbers of arms sold between all groups of society and foreigners. People are organized in Rebel-Groups and their subordinates or use light arms in daily life, in civil war.

For political purposes the organization of transparent and free elections for all levels, leading to the construction of a constitutional-democratic regime, is the predominant aim, but the process is hindered by various disagreements between society-groups and is nearly made into ridicule by the ongoing fighting, primarily in the eastern Kivu-provinces. At the moment, the date for the election is postponed from June 2005 to June 2006.

In general, the process is strongly restrained by the ongoing combats and disaccords concerning a diversity of economic and political interests between the following operating actors:

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<sup>16</sup> there has been a second Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement in 2001, which had also problems in its implementation.

- Joseph Kabila and Jean Pierre Bemba (MLC, noted on top) discussing the definitive arrangements in the state-structure with the other government parties
- RCD-Goma and UDPS (Union pour la Démocratie et le Progrès social) and especially the new "Alliance for the salvation of the Inner Congolese Dialogue" fighting for a reopening of the Dialogue to let all groups participate
- Meanwhile, UDPS and PALU (Parti Lumumbiste Unifié ), the two greatest political parties in the DRC, prepare the organization of the political opposition, as they were too divided to find a common candidate for the elections
- Illegal exploitation of the resources in Eastern Congo is an important grade based on the civil war circumstances and the violent occupation of mines and other strategic territories by local groups
- The DRC inhabits more or less 250 different ethnic groups. The highest concentrations are Luba (18%), Mongo (17%), Kongo (15%) and Asande (10%). Ethnic questions are often instrumentalized for economic conflicts. The most critical case is the status of the Banyamulenge, Congolese soldiers of Rwandan origin.

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## IS ANYBODY STILL A STATE IN CONGO?

### REALISM APPROACH

Theories of *international* relations, such as Realism and Neorealism, are based on the interaction of states. Nevertheless, there are exceptions to these theories, which take “failed states” into account as well - where it is not yet clear to which state or power a territory belongs. In these cases, other states compete to fill the political vacuum with influence on the territory. This seems to be a possible scenario for the Congo Conflict. Hence we discussed in our workgroup the question, whether the Democratic Republic of Congo qualifies as a state under the criteria put forward by neorealism. An answer to this question would allow us to decide if the Democratic Republic of Congo is an actor in neorealist terms and thus relevant for explaining the conflict.

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) was granted membership status to the UNO in 1971. Although this form of international recognition is usually a clear indicator for statehood, things are not as clear in the case of the DRC. So the workgroup tried to clarify the status of Congo by applying the neorealist criteria for states<sup>17</sup>

Concerning the first condition, *Administration (not bargaining)*, it has to be assumed that the Congolese Government does not have the capacity nor the authority to administrate the whole territory. The DRC actually is a state „in Transition“, with its first democratic elections planned for June 2005. Especially in the eastern part of the DRC there is an ongoing civil war concerning local domains. Therefore, the frontiers in this region are more or less blurred by migration and commerce. A constant unregulated flow of refugees pass the borders every day and the state does not have the means to control them. Thus, the criterion of *Borders, indicating domestic / foreign spheres* seems just as inapplicable.

The feature of *territoriality* can be seen in the context of these border conditions. Several times in the run of the conflict, refugee flows headed in all directions - for the central part of the country as well as the neighbouring states. Bearing this back and

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<sup>17</sup> States are organizations characterized by certain attributes: administration (not bargaining), territoriality (not nomadism), internal sovereignty, esp. power monopoly, social homogenization (not patchworks etc.), external sovereignty (no interference in domestic affairs), citizenship (not multiple



forth movement in mind it is highly unlikely that all the local social groups, partly belonging to transborder ethnics, attribute the same importance to the frontiers as the international society.

This brings us to the issue of *national identity (not regional or other)*. As the conflict has lasted for decades now and the complexity of ethnic, regional and national relations has reached to an impenetrable level, many locals orientate themselves towards primordial identity of family ties, being the only stable point. Even worse are situations in which these last family ties are destroyed violently. The created vacuum is often times filled by integrating into a military group - as in the case of the infant soldiers in the *Maji Maji Militia*. This militia consists in great parts of children, who are orphans or have been separated from their families in refugee camps or rural settlements. In this setting, the characteristic of *citizenship (not multiple identities)* seems to be even more futile. For example the question about the citizenship of some of the collectives involved in the conflict has been brought up repeatedly: Were the combatants Congolese or were they of Rwandan or Ugandan origin? Which groups of refugees have the right to settle in the DRC, which ones have to be accepted by the neighbouring states? On the one hand, these questions stand for the national and international significance that is attributed to a Congolese citizenship. On the other hand, and this seems to be more relevant here, these questions point towards the fact that there is no unambiguous concept of a Congolese citizenship to refer to.<sup>18</sup>

By internal and external sovereignty, we mean an internal power monopoly by the government and its apparatus without interference in domestic affairs by foreign powers. Looking at internal sovereignty, the most striking feature seems to be the disputes within the transitional government, consisting of president Kabila and four vice-presidents representing different opposition groups. This integrated body has not lead to the expected unification but has actually deepened the rift between the groups in control of the territories. Consequently it cannot be assumed that the government controls the DRC as a whole. Apparently the integration of the different regional oppositions at the federal level in Kinshasa only diminished the level of

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identities), national identity (not regional or other), borders, indicating domestic/ foreign spheres, symbols.

<sup>18</sup> Read for example Antoine Lawson: " Central Africa: Integration suffers setback" in Pan African News Agency, March 17, 2004.

informality and the violence apparent in some confrontations. Nonetheless, there still remain local fights.

For the second characteristic, external sovereignty, it is important to note that the rebel groups dominating a great part of the DRC have much closer ties with Uganda and Rwanda. These connections have a stronger influence on their behaviour than their governmental participation in the DRC. This prevents them from following national interests for the DRC. In addition to this, Rwanda and Uganda are also capable of influencing the proceedings in the DRC directly. Another clear sign for a lack of sovereignty is the installation of the UN mission MONUC in the DRC and its further remaining until today.

Concerning the criterion of *social homogenization (not patchworks etc.)* the situation seems to be closely related to the points of *identity, territoriality and citizenship*. The DRC is inhabited by a variety of different ethnics, who play an important role in the conflict, or are instrumentalised for economic or military aspects. Any way, one cannot speak of social homogenization, as the social differences among the population are tremendous.

Regarding all the trouble with the named criteria so far, the last point, *state symbols*, seems to be of little relevance. There are state symbols for the DRC (a flag, a hymn etc.), which have symbolic meaning for the Congolese Citizens, but as long as the state still is "in transition" and the conflict situation impedes social development, a deeper identification with the state might appear impossible.

Having studied all these attributes, a clear decision in favour of one of the two possibilities laid down by the hypothesis is difficult. Whether the DRC can be considered a state acting (sovereign) in the conflict or whether the DRC represents a "failed" state and the only decisive actors are the other states involved in the conflict is hard to tell. On the one hand, the DRC does not completely fulfill a single one of the criteria. Hence the first possibility can be excluded.

However, the role of the construction of a state or the "transitional state" of the DRC is of such great importance in the conflict that it cannot be neglected in its handling. The territory has a history of state-constructions since its (de)colonisation; it is registered in the UN states list and is recognized all over the world. More importantly,

its lack in sovereignty does not mean that it has no power at all. Rather the impact of its political and economical weight, its military staff and the limited social infrastructure on the course of the conflict is apparent.

Accordingly the latter alternative, a "failed" state in hands of others, is also inapplicable. Negotiations about the terrain or the economical, social and political circumstances therein, without a decisive participation by the DRC itself seem to be unthinkable.

Ultimately, the case of the DRC status in the "Conflict of the Great Lakes" seems to fit none of the actor categories proposed in the Neorealism hypothesis discussed here. It exemplifies the amalgamation of the levels of analysis and the demand for more complex investigation frames adaptable to current conflicts.

## **APPLICATION OF PUTNAM'S "TWO-LEVEL-GAME" THEORY TO THE CONFLICT IN DRC**

The Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), or the "Conflicts of the Great Lakes," as it is often called in international press, seems to have been quite immune to any attempts towards finding an international solution. Particularly, the two most important ceasefire agreements, contracted in Lusaka 1999 (LCA99) and Sun City 2002 (SC02), failed in their application, although, when signed, aroused a lot of hope.<sup>19</sup> In order to understand the dynamics of those negotiations and the reasons for their failure, we will now look at them applying Putnam's Two Level Game. We will start with the LCA99, as this one is more easily applicable because there is an international and a distinct domestic level involved. The SC02 on the other hand, called "Inner-Congolese Dialogue", did not really have an international level, since the negotiations mainly took place between different domestic opposition groups and the central government. We will return to that later, when looking for an alternative for the failed LCA99, which we are analyzing first.

The governments who signed the LCA99-agreement (the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda, Uganda, Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe; see also the introduction to this conflict) constituted the first level, taking place on the international

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<sup>19</sup>The German Office of Foreign Affairs still considers the LCA of 1999 as the base for all ongoing peace efforts in the DRC [http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/www/de/laenderinfos/laender/laender\\_ausgabe\\_html?type\\_id=11&land\\_id=85](http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/www/de/laenderinfos/laender/laender_ausgabe_html?type_id=11&land_id=85), Downloaded on 30.08.2004

sphere. At the second (or domestic) level, where the "ratification" process took place, the rebel groups in the DRC, such as RCD and MLC, can be regarded as the most important actors besides the government and the political opposition. The demands of the rebel groups, which were or could not (be) met in the agreement, seem to have made the implementation of the planned peaceful arrangement impossible. Instead, one might get the impression that the rebel groups preferred the violent status quo, which according to Putnam's theory would then be a "voluntary defection".<sup>20</sup>

Thus, our hypothesis resulting from a Two Level Game perspective would be the following: *As the Rebel Groups in the DRC opted for an ongoing war, the LCA 99 was spoiled in the ratification process by their "voluntary defection".*

How can we prove our hypothesis? First of all, it has to be noted that the natural resources within the territory of the DRC and their illegal exploitation are of great importance in this war. This has been discussed in detail in the „*Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo*“ by the UN<sup>21</sup>. Gertrud Kanu and Iseewanga Indongo-Imbanda quote the principal conclusion of this report: *"the conflict in the Congo centres mainly on the access, the control and the commerce with five important resources: Coltan, diamonds, copper, cobalt and gold"*.<sup>22</sup>

Second, the close relation of the two levels makes a clear distinction between the political spheres more complicated and gives those actors advantages in following their interests, which are more or less directly present at both levels. We refer to the linkages between Rwanda and the RCD or Uganda and the MLC.

There is evidence that the RCD and the MLC were forced by Rwanda and Uganda to sign the LCA99. This made it possible for Rwanda and Uganda to uphold a responsible and peaceful image on the international level, being important for their international reputation in commerce and politics. On the other side, the implementation of the LCA99 failed exactly because the rebel groups refused to accept the consequences. They continued with the illegal exploitation of resources in the terrains they controlled and almost to the same degree still control today. As

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<sup>20</sup> [http://www.kongo-kinshasa.de/geschichte/ge\\_05.htm](http://www.kongo-kinshasa.de/geschichte/ge_05.htm), Downloaded on 11.05.2004

<sup>21</sup> Resume of the Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2002: [http://www.welthungerhilfe.de/WHHDE/wir/positionen/Kongo\\_\\_B\\_\\_rgerkrieg\\_als\\_Wirtschaftsfaktor.pdf](http://www.welthungerhilfe.de/WHHDE/wir/positionen/Kongo__B__rgerkrieg_als_Wirtschaftsfaktor.pdf), Downloaded on 2004/08/30, further explications by Frank Nyakiru, in The Monitor (Uganda) of March 22, 2004

<sup>22</sup> [www.kongo-kinshasa.de](http://www.kongo-kinshasa.de) (downloaded on 2005/03/03), translation by C.S.

observed by Gertrud Kanu and Iseewanga Indongo-Imbanda, *"the armed opposition departed several times from the agreement of Lusaka, by among other impediments continuing with the combats, leading to the conquest or the occupation of territories controlled by the Kinshasa-government"*.<sup>23</sup>

All this was facilitated by the weakness of the Congolese state, which is financially supporting some of the rebel groups but still cannot control neither all of them nor its own territory. It is obvious that the state in general lacks power, it has no central control over the different regions officially subordinated to either the government or a rebel group. This situation results in many local fights.<sup>24</sup>

Gertrud Kanu and Iseewanga Indongo-Imbanda describe how president L.-D. Kabila did neither act in favor of the LCA99-application: *"Before the assassination of President L.-D. Kabila on 01/16/01, the conflict parties departed from the fragile peace-agreement frequently. President L.-D. Kabila for example refused to accept the "Facilitateur" of the Inner Congolese dialogue, Ket Masire, for the reason that he regarded him to be one-sided and demanded a revision of the Peace agreement from Lusaka immediately. He also offended the positioning of the UN-mission in the DRC (MONUC)."25*

The instability of the government and, first of all, the resistance of the rebel groups against governmental sovereignty, are not determined by political purposes that could be handled on the first level. What is of interest for the parties in the conflict is rather the local control of resources and commercial routes, which determine the military (and political) strategy of the actors. If these interests are more easily reached in a state of civil war, then every attempt for peace will be counteracted by a "voluntary defection."<sup>26</sup>

Due to the fact that economical circumstances in wars transform the interests of actors, the problem can be that those circumstances are not approached with peace attempts referring to the principal origins of conflict. The growing importance of the "economy of war" has come to overshadow the principal objectives.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> www.Kongo-Kinshasa.de (downloaded on 2005/02/14), translation by C.S.

<sup>24</sup> Vgl. Aust, Björn: Feindliche Übernahmen. Ökonomische Interessen und "militärisches Unternehmertum" im Kongo, S. 145

<sup>25</sup> www.Kongo-Kinshasa.de (downloaded on 2005/02/14), translation by C.S.

<sup>26</sup> Vgl. Aust, Björn: Feindliche Übernahmen. Ökonomische Interessen und "militärisches Unternehmertum" im Kongo, S. 149

<sup>27</sup> Vgl. Aust, Björn: Feindliche Übernahmen. Ökonomische Interessen und "militärisches Unternehmertum" im Kongo, S. 149 and Vgl. Ballentine, Karen: Beyond Greed and Grievance:

Nevertheless, the rebel groups can not be seen in total confrontation to the government of Kabila. Kabila's demission was utopian and in addition to that would also have provoked a very risky situation for the rebel groups themselves. The abrogation of all legal frameworks would have led to even more intense fighting among those groups and in consequence could threaten their assets.

Which aspects would then be of interest to the rebel groups, permitting the government to broaden its win set?

An autonomous status of the territories they already control in Eastern Congo (esp. Ituri and North- and Southkivu) would legitimate their predominance in these regions and would give them more economic and political liberties, especially in confrontation with the UN-troops. An integration of the most powerful rebel groups into the government would certainly lead to the manifestation or even extension of their influence.

These were exactly the issues discussed in Sun City: the governmental spheres were divided among the different parties of the "Inner Congolese dialog". The government now consists of President Joseph Kabila (son of Laurent-D.), his staff and four vice-presidents representing different opposition and rebel groups. This structure, however, has not led to the expected unification between the different groups towards a coordinated coercion of power, but has actually deepened the division of the territory between the participants. So the official government still cannot claim control over the whole DRC, although the integration of the different regional opposition groups at the central level in Kinshasa decreased the informal space where many groups acted and therefore diminished the extent of violence in some areas. Nevertheless, there remain local fights at an alarming intensity.

With that concept, SC02 made progress in the conflict and generated hope towards a real peace process. But again, its ratification on the internal level had to pass unexpected difficulties. Relatively new actor-alliances, such as the "*alliance for the salvation of the inner Congolese dialog*" and "*the Congolese Opposition*", fought for an inclusion of all parties into a new-opened dialog. Besides those groups gaining importance, controversies among the already integrated groups continued.<sup>28</sup>

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Reconsidering the Economic Dynamics of Armed Conflict, in: Ballentine, Karen/ Sherman, Jake (Hrsg.): The Political Economy of Armed Conflict. Beyond Greed and Grievance

<sup>28</sup> Controversies between J. Kabila and Jean Pierre Bemba (MLC) about the formalisation of the new constellation: <http://www.kongo-kinshasa.de/geschichte/geschichte5.php>, downloaded on 2005/03/10.

This again shows the complexity of the conflict in the DRC and the importance of a cautious and detailed consideration of every local fight and economic circumstances.

All in all we get to the conclusion, that the hypothesis seems true and the Two-Level-Game-theory is useful to explain the ongoing of the Congo Conflict. Central for us was the concept of voluntary defection. Economic interests and the longing for autonomy of the decisive domestic veto-players have spoiled the agreement reached at the international level. In the Application of Putnam's Two-Level-Games-Theory, it also becomes very apparent how the complex political and social constellation of the DRC is determined by the tremendous illegal exploitation of natural resources. Any attempts for a peaceful solution have to take this into account.

One could also think about concentrating efforts on the reduction of the illegal exploitation of resources in the first place, which would be the only other possible solution of the situation. This would also require a more intense dealing with the illegal negotiations between the conflict groups and their partners in Rwanda, Uganda and in the "industrialized" countries.

Confronted with the weakness of the Congolese state, one could, in this context, even doubt the possibility of the distinction between the two levels that are central for Putnam. However, for us it seemed reasonable to apply the Two Level Game as the Congolese state has reached internal and international recognition and is actually far from being totally deconstructed.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Although one should not forget that its construction is mainly based on colonial history and international, especially UN, construction.

# THE CRISIS IN COLUMBIA

BY ONDŘEJ SPAČEK:

## COLUMBIA – AN INTRODUCTION



Source: Central Intelligence Agency,  
[http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/americas/colombia\\_pol\\_2001.jpg](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/americas/colombia_pol_2001.jpg)

The members of the Latin America Group decided to focus on the crisis in Colombia. We chose this conflict area in spite of the fact that the conflict we are witnessing here is not a purely international one.

Colombia is located in the north-west of South America bordering Panama in the north, Ecuador and Peru in the south, Brazil in the south-east and Venezuela in the north-east and has a direct access to both the Pacific and the Atlantic Ocean. In large parts of the

state area, its inhabitants face difficult living conditions, especially in the Andes mountain range in the western part of the country, which makes up about one third of the total area, but where about 80% of the inhabitants live. Poverty is also widespread in the swamps of Amazonas in the south-east covering another third of the country's territory. The Andes are divided into three subsystems by the rivers of Magdalena and Cauca: the Cordillera Colombiana Occidental, Central and Oriental. Other important rivers are the Orinoco, constituting part of the border to Venezuela, and the Guaviare in the south at the entrance to the Amazonas region.

Despite its extensive area (1 141 748 km<sup>2</sup>) and a very uneven population allocation, Colombia is a unitary state with 32 departments administered from the capital district of Bogotá, located in the mountain region in the centre of the country. However, large parts of the country are not controlled by the central government, but are occupied by paramilitary forces such as the AUC (*Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia*) or by



guerrilla groups, the biggest of them being the FARC (*Fuerzas armadas revoucionarias de Colombia*).

Similarly to other countries in the region, national politics have been characterized by the conflict between liberals and conservatives right from the foundation of these parties in Colombia in 1849, including some armed encounters (e. g. the “The War of the Thousand Days” between 1899 and 1903, ending with Panama (“Nueva Granada”) being split up and therefore setting a definite end to what once used to be “Greater Colombia”). This bipolar structure persisted well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century reaching its climax in the conflict known as *La Violencia* between 1949 and 1958, leaving behind 250 - 300,000 dead. The two parties agreed to cooperate in a National Front where the presidency rotates and cabinet seats are divided equally. This agreement lasted formally until 1978 and practically until 1986, when new actors appeared on the Colombian political scene.

Some analysts argue that it was explicitly the agreement between the two most powerful parties that contributed to the formation of armed opposition. In 1965, the ELN (*Ejército de Liberación Nacional*) was founded, as the first guerrilla organization in Colombia. It was followed by the FARC (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*) in 1966, the military wing of the Communist Party of Colombia. Today, it has some 17,000 members, being the guerrilla movement with the biggest political influence. Finally, the M-19 (*Movimiento 19 de Abril*) was founded in 1971, the only guerrilla that managed to transform itself into an ordinary party by an agreement with the government in 1989.

The guerrillas, politically far left, have to finance their activities. Drug trafficking and later kidnapping became the main source of income, although the majority of guerrilla leaders still deny receiving any financial resources through drug business. What started as political opposition has developed into a conflict touching the whole society and every sphere of life.

Throughout the years, a number of attempts to stop the conflict, by some even called civil war, were undertaken. In 1982, for instance, President Belisario Betancúr Cuartos granted amnesty for the guerrilla combatants and freed political prisoners. Neither this, nor a Peace Commission in the 1990s was very successful. The successful institutionalisation of M-19 was only of temporary importance as the party didn't manage to keep its active role in the political life and was last represented in the parliament in 1991.

A new series of peace talks started in 1999 after the Conservative Andrés Pastrana Arango had become president in the 1998 elections. The FARC was granted a safe zone of the size of Switzerland. To negotiate a lasting peace agreement, Pastrana and the FARC leaders met in 1999. In October 2001, the representatives of the Colombian government and the FARC signed the San Francisco agreement. The parties committed themselves to negotiate a cease-fire, but the negotiations soon had to be interrupted due to the lack of compromises between Pastrana and the FARC and the constant violations of the treaty. Pastrana's "peace experiment" ended with a military invasion of the formerly autonomous territory of the FARC and numerous casualties on both sides.

From what has been said until now, it could be assumed that the Colombian conflict is rather an internal problem. Our working group, too, was tempted to concentrate on the conflict in Colombia itself. However, in the end, we managed to see the international side of the conflict.

The US-American Administration and especially the US Drug Enforcement Agency turned out to be the strongest player on the international level (3<sup>rd</sup> level of analysis according to Waltz). The United States of America have been active in the region since the 1960s, when they started granting financial and military support to South American governments (and later also to rightist opposition groups, as for example in Chile in early 1970s). The US employed these means in order to limit the spread of what was perceived as a Cuban-inspired revolutionary threat and to support the "democratic candidates", often ignoring the difference between a leftist democratic party and armed groups.

In Colombia, US military advisors were quite active for the government of the country and inspired the formation of paramilitary forces of "self-defense". In 1965, a presidential decree legalized the armament of civilians. Three years later, this decree was converted into permanent legislation and the law stayed in force until May 1989 when it was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. Later on, penalties for members and organizers of paramilitary groups were introduced in an additional decree.

After the end of the Cold War, the priorities of the United States in South America, and especially in the Andes, changed and the main task became to eradicate the cultivation of coca, its processing into cocaine or heroin and the subsequent distribution on the US market. Colombia, today the world's largest cocaine producer

and supplier of about 90% of the cocaine and up to 60% of the heroine distributed in the United States, was a clear target.

Since the beginning of the 90s, huge sums of money have been invested and different approaches (aerial spraying of the coca fields, incorporation of US forces in the Colombian army, several talks of the Colombian government with the guerrilleros) have been applied to stop the drug trade and normalize the situation in the country. Until now, with very limited success. On the contrary, the US policies are provoking a lot of criticism especially concerning the militarization and criminalization of the Colombian civil society through US-politics and policies.

## **CONSTRUCTIVISM – THE ALL EXPLAINING WONDER THEORY?**

In the session on realism, the group unanimously agreed that the (neo-)realist black-box vision of the world does not give enough clues for explaining the Colombian conflict. As an alternative meta-theory, constructivist approaches are challenging realism. Constructivism does not solely open up the black box of the state. It also comes with a new perspective on what is happening in it. Constructivist authors concentrate on the social structures and on the way how they are being created by the actors and how they influence the actors in return. Not only material power of the actors is taken into account. The constructivist researchers concentrate also on the “discursive power”, power of knowledge, ideas, culture, ideologies and language. Constructivists analyze the power defining identity from which then the interests of actors are derived and which inspires the form of social structures. All in all, we were confronted with a completely different approach to international relations and were eager to see if it could deal more successfully with our conflict.

In our view, it surely could do this in one aspect. It helps us to understand the relationship between Colombians and their own country, the neighboring states and the United States of America. From our point of view, this relationship is based on the idea of nationalism, which can be only taken into account when using a constructivist approach in the analysis. Let us return to the time of the liberation fights in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and have a more detailed look on this phenomenon. The struggle for independence was started by the Creole<sup>30</sup> elites of the colonies and their motivation was clear: better career chances for themselves and their children, because under

the Spanish (or Portuguese) rule, the future prospects of Creoles were much more limited than those of peninsular Spaniards. Whereas the *peninsulares* could assume higher positions in the civil service both in Spain and all the colonies, the Creoles were limited to their own vice-royalty. The liberation of Latin America was elite-led and the pan-American coalition among the newly independent nations split up shortly after the victory was gained.

Afterwards, each country went its own way in creating national heroes, symbols and legends in order to form a national identity. In Colombia, for example, the national hero of the first order became Simón Bolívar, the main protagonist of the liberation of the vice-royalty Gran Colombia. The strategy was successful – all the countries were able to construct relatively strong national identities and create patriotic feelings inside their citizens. This sometimes led to animosities and war, as for example between Argentina and Chile or Chile and Bolivia. However, the feeling of common past prevailed and it was reinforced by the image of a common enemy. First, it was Spain, but with its fading power, it was replaced by a new world power – the United States of America.

The constructivism also makes it possible to have a closer look at the ideologies of the actors in the conflict. The degree of influence of the communist ideology on the guerrillas can be analyzed, but in our point of view is rather low. Also, the importance of ethnic origin for taking part in the conflict can be questioned in a constructivist approach. We believe that ethnic origin does play a role, as for example the majority of the members of the Colombian government is white. This aspect isn't decisive, however. A constructivist research might even bring ideas how to solve the conflict, for example by reaching a "national reconciliation" dealing with the values and symbols that are common to all the actors of the conflict.

An important disadvantage of the constructivist approach is the high proportion of field work that has to be done. This is always connected with high costs on time and other resources, in the case of Colombia additionally with substantial security risks. A simple analysis of the discourse using newspaper articles, speeches of the main personalities of the parties participating in the conflict or of the statements for the press would probably not offer a lot of new information about the present status of

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<sup>30</sup> A Creole is a white person born in the New World.

the conflict. However, it could well be used for an analysis of the history of the conflict. We would be able to see its evolution and maybe even find some regularities in time, phases of lower and higher tension between the actors, and thus predict how the conflict could evolve in the future and say when chances to solve the conflict are highest.

Constructivism might seem as an all-explaining wonder theory on the first sight, but its complexity and its need for lots of primary data makes it, at least in our eyes, applicable only to partial aspects of the conflict and not to the conflict as a whole.

## GLOBALIZATION

The lecture on globalization proved to contain some very applicable aspects to our conflict. The “*process generated by world wide interplay of capital flows and communications flows enabled by new technologies*” can be noticed clearly not only in the big industrialized countries of the Northern hemisphere, but as well in a small South American country seemingly caught up only in its own national business.

Primarily, the group discussed the direct influences of globalization on our region by looking at the relevant flows. Concerning the first two examples mentioned in the definition, capital and communications flows, we found out that big loans by the IMF and the World Bank constitute a great part of the international *capital* flowing into Colombia. Secondly, the money obtained from the international smuggling and trafficking of drugs and weapons makes up another substantial part of the Colombian shadow economy. Certainly these capital flows are a consequence of globally formed networks and interests.

As another example, the *human* flow of migrants out of Colombia is quite astonishing: In 2002 alone, more than 360 000 Colombians applied for entry into the USA. The rising migration numbers are alertly observed by Amnesty International and other NGOs, which form another network trying to regulate *communication* flows out of the country. Together with the UN and representatives of the EU and US, they keenly observe the implementation of human rights in the country and put pressure on the government to apply democratic practices and reliable jurisdiction.

The other question we discussed focused on the existence of realistic exit options for the region and its actors to avoid being dragged into an unwanted process of globalization and form autonomous regions free from international pressure. To analyze this question we mainly focused on the economic side of globalization: A common South American market like Mercosur would enable the participating countries to protect themselves from the US domination of prices. Apart from that, we found inner-state peace and security to be a prerequisite for further sovereignty of the state. Only if Colombia manages to find a solution for the ongoing conflict, will the country have a right to refuse the international interference in their issues. In this situation direct international influence might be at least reduced, but the question remains, whether it could prevent the country from becoming subject to the various effects of globalization. Having thus argued, the group came up with the question of whether our conflict might somehow even be promoted by globalization and the international interest in the country, or whether these factors help to constrain the conflict.

Finally, we spoke about the relations of international dependence and recognized our country as being clearly on the dependent side of globalization. As many of the Latin American states, Colombia exports mainly agricultural products like coffee or flowers and depends on the international trade system to obtain rather expensive imports in the field of technology, which are not being substituted by national industries. Furthermore, the lacking personal security, bad infrastructure and absence of skilled workers do not attract international investors and force many people out of the country, which eventually results in the high amount of migration mentioned above. Summing up the arguments, the group came to the conclusion that Colombia, like many other developing countries, does not shape the process of globalization, but instead is constantly shaped by it. While we detected capital flows, content flows and information flows into Colombia, the only constant flows out of the country unfortunately seemed to be drugs and migrants. Since the territory holds no important hubs or nodes for financial or informational conjunction, it cannot be expected to find a way out of this position in the near future, but will have to fiercely work on solving its inner conflict in order to profit from the process of globalization.